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#31

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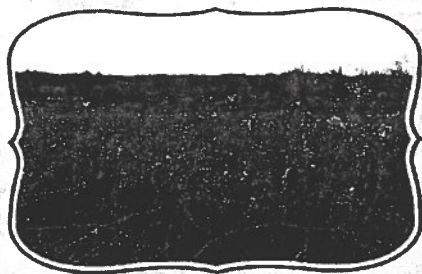


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ROCTOBER #31: KIDS AND RODENTS ISSUE!

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Kids, rodents & rock n roll, from Annette in the ears to Michael Jackson singing "Ben," it's always money in the bank. This issue we meet the best rat band (Good Rats), the best singing kids & teens (including the fab Tammys) and in our centerpiece, the best singing rodent kids...The Chipmunks! Our annual Comix Galore issue is a wee lite on comix, but hopefully 27,000+ words on a cartoon band will somehow fill the bill. So what are you waiting for, like the rat did with the dumpster...dive in!



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Dwarfrook!: www.quigsmss.com/kingzhomepage



Roctober.

We got the new issue today. The magazine looks awesome. I love the VelVeeda cover. Also I really have to salute the fact that you every single thing we sent you. That was very generous of you indeed. I must disagree with your Chickenhawks review - I assure that all six of us in attendance (you know, the 440s, Larry and myself) clapped politely after every song.

Later,
-Leslie

Even at #17, I think you have sorely underestimated Billy Bob's Rock-A-Fire Explosion in your assessment of the all-time greatest robot rock bands. Not only did they precede their arch-enemies, Chuck E. Cheese & The Chuckolettes, chronologically, they also superceded them qualitatively, and by a long shot.

CEC&TC were a prefab group with their eyes only on the money prize, and their repertoire of surefire good-timey oldies such as "Tutti Frutti" and "Splish Splash" proves their crowd-pleasing ways. (Although I didn't seem them listed in your roundup, I cite CEC&TC here for contrast.) RAFF, on the other hand, were in it primarily for the sake of the music. I caught their act on numerous occasions, and was mightily impressed by their set list, filled as it was with less than megahit ditties. While CEC&TC often performed "Something," the limp-dick hit from side 1 of "Abbey Road," RAFF would play the entire side 2 medley; while CEC&TC would choose the singalong "Hungry Heart" when dipping into the Springsteen bag, RAFF would perform the bleak title song from "Nebraska." I even once saw them do "Frankie Teardrop," the showstopping number from the first Suicide album.

OK, this all points to an obvious conclusion, one which even I can't deny: if RAFF was so all-fired monumental, why did they bite the big commercial bullet while CEC&TC still thrives? The answer is equally obvious: they were that far ahead of their time. Someday the serious history of robot rock will be written (for which your article will serve as a worthwhile though superficial primer), and when it is the world will know how cool Rock-A-Fire Explosion truly was.

Sincerely,

-Johnny Jupiter

The editor responds: Mr. Jupiter -Chuck Cheese's "band" was not listed for the very reasons you site. Compared to the more ambitious Rock-A-Fire combo, or their predecessors, the pioneering Country Bear Jamboree band (is their Revenant box set ever going to come out?) the Chuckolettes seem as inconsequential as the most weary cover band playing a college bar on a Tuesday night. Yet I still think #17 is fair, but we'll have to agree to disagree on this one, or barring your willingness to do so, disagree to agree to disagree. Thank you for your letter

Name 5

...Rat Bands

1. Rat At Rat R
2. 7000 Dying Rats
3. The Good Rats
4. The Rats
5. Killer Rodents

...Bunny Rockers

1. Bunny Brains
2. Bunnygrunt
3. Rabbit's Hat
4. Bun E. Carlos
5. Jack Rabid

...Mouse Music Makers

1. Fragile Porcelien Mice
 2. Mouse
 3. The Meices
 4. Mice Parade
 5. Field Mice
- ...More mouse musics
1. Exploding White Mice
 2. Mouse On Mars
 3. Mouse And The Traps
 4. Miki Zone (dressed in mouse ears)
 5. "Do The Mouse" by Soupy Sales

...bands named after animals I think are rodents, but might be wrong

1. Beaver Patrol
2. Groundhogs
3. The Gerbils
4. The Moles
5. The Racoons

Now for sump'n completely different...
...Eyepatch Rockers!

1. Ars Nova- Moderately popular late 60's Jazz-Rock band . One member had an eyepatch.
2. David Bowie- Briefly wore an eyepatch around the time of "Pin Ups".
3. Depressions - British Punk band circa '78-'79. Often accused of being phonies or bandwagon hoppers , but the only guy who DIDN'T look like he'd been beaten with a tire chain happened to have an eyepatch!
4. Hook - Latter day Chicago-area band , given to dressing as pirates. Johnny Kidd was doing it 40 years ago , but , what the hell.
5. Roger Daltrey - Struck in the eye by a microphone being swung around by the less adept Gary Glitter. The injury was apparently minor, as The Who still took Gary along on their U.S. tour. Upon hearing of the accident , Lux Interior asked , "Did the people applaud?"

BONUS: SAMMY! Always Sammy!

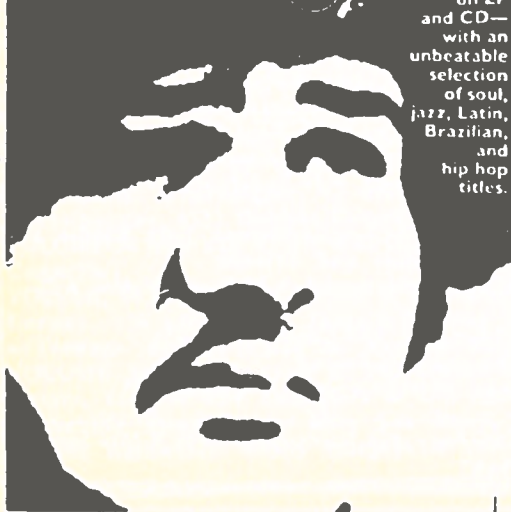
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#30 ROBOT ROCK 'N' ROLL. **ARTHUR LEE MAYE**, SCOTT RADINSKY.
 CAPTURED! BY ROBOTS. *SHRIMPENSTIEN*, GILBERT AND GEORGE.
 ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, CAVESTOMP 2001. RICHARD AND THE
 YOUNG LIONS, SYNDICATE OF SOUND, TROGGS, BLOWFLY, ARCHER
 PREWITT, JUGHEAD, MARTIN AND LEWIS, DLR, SNOOP DOGG, CRISPY
 AMBULANCE, BRYAN GREGORY, ANDY STARR, JUNIOR BROWN

#29 SAMMY DAVIS JR./MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL ISSUE: EUGENE
 CHADBOURNE, REV. NORB. LALI DONOVAN, MIKE LAVELLA, VIC
 BONDI, GEORGE TABB, DR. DANTE, MARK MURRMANN, CYNTHIA
 PLASTERCASTER, HR. JAMES BROWN, AC/DC, GRANDE OTELO, MILES
 DAVIS, THE MILLIONAIRE, THE RAT PACK, MARTIN & LEWIS, MARK
 ROBINSON, plus ABOUT 1,000 SAMMY DAVIS, JR. REVIEWS!

#28 COMEDY/NOVELTY RECORDS ISSUE: REDD FOXX, RUDY RAY MOORE.
 THE DICKIES, KID CREOLE, ANDRE WILLIAMS, LOS STRAITJACKETS, T.
 VALENTINE, PAT BOONE, SWAMP DOGG, MACEO PARKER, XUXA.

#27 PSYCHEDELIC SUPERHEROES, PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE.
 MARVIN RAINWATER, D.J. FONTANA, CHUCK BERRY, KENNY WAYNE
 SHEPHERD, MISFITS, ROCK & WRESTLING, FLAMING LIPS, GREGG "MR.
 COMPILATION PRODUCER" GELLER, DAVID LEE ROTH, CHARLES
 SCHULZ, LITTLE RICHARD, WAX TRAX RECORDS, DON "SUGARCANE"
 HARRIS, SCREAMING JAY HAWKINS

#26 COMICS GALORE ISSUE: CIBO MATTO, ALVIN CASH, BRUNETTI'S
 NANCY TRYOUTS, ROCK & WRESTLING, SPARKS, TIM MAIA, DAN CLOWES,
 MORTIIS, JOHNNY LEGEND, TERRY JACKS, MONKS, HALL OF DYNAMIC
 GREATNESS CALENDER

#25 UPDATE ISSUE: JERRY BUTLER, HASIL ADKINS, CORDELL
 JACKSON, CHARLES WRIGHT, R. KELLY, THE FLYS, TRIKK BABY,
 KOTTONMOUTH KINGS, SCREAMING LORD SUTCH, ORION, MUMMIES,
 SAM THE SHAM, GOSPEL MIDGETS/JOY BOYZ, LOU CHRISTIE, ANDRE
 WILLIAMS, GEORGE ELLIOT, FELA, JOBRIATH, CRIME, THE PHANTOM,
 THE FAST, DOLLY, SKIP SPENCE, KISS, DION MCGREGOR, EDDIE MONEY,
 BILLY LEE RILEY, RONNIE DAWSON

#24 VANILLA ICE, PATTI SMITH, THE NUGE, SUGAR PIE DESANTO,
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 PARTON, ? (QUESTION MARK), WEST COAST POP ART EXPERIMENTAL BAND, 2 LIVE
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 STANDELLS, JOHN HOLMSTROM, NICO, KICKS, DORA HALL, JANIS
 MARTIN, P-FUNK

#16 MONKEY ROCK'N'ROLL, DENNIS DUNAWAY, NEW COLONY 6, ? & THE
 MYSTERIANS, TYRONE DAVIS, SAMMY DAVIS, JR., MONKS, GOBLINS,
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 A-GO-GO, ROLLINS & ROKY, VELVET CRUSH, PEDRO BELL, THE MONKS,
 GARY GLITTER, THE HISTORY OF MIDGET ROCK AND ROLL, KENNY
 "R2D2" BAKER, KID DYNAMITE, HFH, GARAGESHOCK, WILDGIRL
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 (live)

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VOLUME 33: #128 w/monks, Demolition Dollrods, Bobby Joe Ebola, #129 Cavestomp! w/Chocolate Watchband, Vipers, Dead Moon, 5-6-7-8s, Hatebombs, #130 Cavestomp! w/Standells, Gravedigger V, Mooney Suzuki, Loons, Greenhornes, #131 Goblins-Return of the Pharoahs
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VOLUME 36: #140 Passover In Puppettown 2000, #141 w/ Ted Ansani, #142 w/ The Smugglers & L'il Shorties, #143 Rockabilly Hoedown w/ Billy Lee Riley, Deke Dickerson, Marvin Rainwater, Sonny Burgess & Sleepy Labeeff

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 #147 w/ Marvin Tate's D-Settlement & Big Angry Fish
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VOLUME 40: #156 w/Hanson & The Bangs, #157 Hot Clips, #158 w/Alan Gillett, Cynthia Plaster Caster, KIM, M.O.T.O., Goblins, #159 w/ Bobby Conn, Gentleman John, Goblins, Kim, Cats & Jammers
VOLUME 41: #160 Hot Clips 2, #161 w/T. Valentine & Dementia Thirteen, #162 w/Art Loinz, #163 w/CGC

VOLUME 42: #164 Awards, #165 Diversity #166 w/Eddie C. Campbell & Drag King, #167 w/ Airbrush & Unshown

VOLUME 43: #168 LIVE w/ Buh Zombie & Andrew Bird's Bowl of Fire, #169 Chic-A-Go-Go in St. Louis w/Beatle Bob, Ouija, Sexicolor, Fran U.K., The Bubble Swami, #170 Chic-A-Go-Go in MEMPHIS w/ Cordell Jackson, The Masqueraders & Ernest C. Withers, #171 Chic-A-Go-Go in NEW ORLEANS w/ Miss Pussycat, 25 Suaves, Tasty 6, The Stuckups
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VOLUME 50: 5th Anniversary Special w/ The Mulqueeb's!
VOLUME 51: Chic-A-Go-Go 200! W/ Cheap Trick, Jimmy Burns, Neko Case, The Residents, Black Flag, Eddie Clearwater, DJ Assault, Boris The Sprinkler, T. Raumschmiere, Christian Marclay, 2 Man Advantage, Fericito, The Baldwin Brothers, Peaches and Gonzales, Byron Lee and the Dragonaires, The Misfits and MORE!
VOLUME 51: #204 Best of 2000, #205 w/Danielson Famile & Sonnets, #206 w/Good Rats, 7000 Dying Rats & The Racoons, #207 w/Fugazi, Competitorr, The Ex, American Boyfriends

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RATS THE WAY WE LIKE IT!

THE GOOD RATS STORY

"Long Island." To the non-New Yorker it conjures up images of Jay "the Great" Gatsby's extravagance and the nosejobbed Jewish American Princesses whose frigidness was the punchline to 1,000 (pre-Lewinsky) jokes. But those moneyed hoi polloi come from Long Island's North Shore. There's plenty of other real estate and a lot lower property values elsewhere on the Island. For example, you certainly won't experience a country club atmosphere in Seaford when you're drinking drafts with biker chicks at the High Noon Saloon.

I'd long been a casual fan of Long Island's legendary rude rockers the Good Rats, and fate would turn that interest into a visit to the High Noon. Being familiar with the Rats' recording history --- a stellar Garage Psyche LP from the late 60s and a half dozen glorious absurdly decadent 70s Rock albums --- I was surprised to find out from their website (goodrats.com) that they were still active. When I called the hotline and heard not only listings for countless upcoming live shows (including something called "Ratstock III") but also an unyielding rant in a heavy New York accent against certain Rat Fans for not being loyal enough, I knew I had to find out more. I was going to be in NYC the next week, when the High Noon was hosting a series of Rats shows, so I made it my mission to learn what this Good Rats thing was all about.

Over the course of their career the Good Rats have been compared to Kiss, The Dead, The Music Machine, Journey, Cole Porter, Queen, Leatherwolf, The Turtles, Chuck Berry, Steely Dan, Frank Zappa, Blue Cheer, Rod Stewart, The Jimmy Castor Bunch, Van Halen, Extreme and the 1959 B-horror flick "The Killer Shrews." What's amazing is that *all* of these comparisons make perfect sense once you've listened to their albums. They've probably played as many shows as any rock band in history, they've released numerous albums, usually to positive critical response, and they've shared stages with some of the biggest bands of the 70s. Yet the Good Rats remain virtually unknown outside of their small but loyal cult following. "If the rest of the country was Long Island," Rats' drummer Joe Franco once lamented, "we'd be The Beatles."

Well, I doubt even if you scaled the Beatles down to Good Rats level that Ringo and his son would be rocking London's equivalent of the High Noon in 2001, but that's Liverpool's loss. Because the house was *rawked* by the

current incarnation of the Rats (original songwriter/singer Peppi Marchello, his sons Gene on guitar and Stefan "The Weasel" on drums, Denis Perry -- a non-Marchello -- on bass). Mind you, the house being *rawked* was a tiny bar with a "stage" only big enough for a drum kit, and *rawking* consisted of Peppi standing in the middle of the floor looking less like a Rock star and more like a well fed Teamster in shorts, a T-shirt and huge sunglasses ("I'm not wearing these because I think I'm cool, it's my allergies...it's like a million spiders going up my nose..."). But however it looked, the packed crowd responded with incredible gusto, every classic Good Rats song seemingly their favorite and every new tune given full respect.

Though Peppi describes Good Rats fans as "everyone from bikers to dentists, captains of industries to the guys in jail for rape and murder," it looked like the bar was short on CEOs that night. The crowd of a hundred fifty or so rabid Rat-Heads was mostly of the Harley riding and blue-collar varieties. But that doesn't mean they don't have sophisticated tastes, because despite Peppi's rough edges it's very easy to see, even in a dark bar, that he's an unusual talent. In addition to the possessing the intangible magnetism most good front men have, he also has an excellent Rock & Roll voice, with some serious gravel helping to express a full range of sincere, Soulful sentiments. It's also very clear that the songwriting isn't what you expect from a bar band...this is all "professional" composition. That is, even if you don't like every song you can't deny that the craftsmanship is equal or better to comparable commercially successful radio songs.

It's sometimes hard to notice how good the songs are because you get caught up in Peppi's persona; he's keeping it real to the extreme! His stage manner is that of a smart mouthed, tough, neighborhood guy (a writer once described them as "SOOO Italian, you want to just puke spaghetti!" and pointed out that they sold shirts saying "Music so loud, it gives you *Agita*"). But the fans see beyond the tough guy exterior. When Peppi went into the dramatic ballad "Man On A Fish" I looked around and the crowd was completely entranced, with one behemoth of a biker --- not a weekend warrior, this was a 6' 5" hairy beast --- literally weeping! But even if I happened to miss those tears of a goon I wouldn't have been allowed to not know what was up because after the song Peppi declared, "See, not only am I the greatest Rock and Roll singer...but I am also the world's greatest balladeer!" Obviously this was a very special man. The Roctober crew was more than honored to sit down over pizza slices and hear him tell his story.

Born in Brooklyn into a "working stiff" first generation Italian American family (his grandparents came from Sicily), Peppi and Co. moved to the Island when he was seven. His parent's American Dream of upward

By Jake Austen

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mobility was seemingly furthered when Peppi became a college boy, going to St. Johns on a baseball scholarship. A bout of rheumatic fever at age 13 had pretty much wiped out hopes of a pro ball career, but he enjoyed playing and it kept him in school making his folks happy, even if his heart wasn't in his studies.

When the Beatles hit, and guys in the cafeteria started playing guitars, Peppi, who previously was into Swing music, decided to give Rock & Roll a chance. "Did you ever see when the Beatles came into Idlewild, I was one of those guys yelling, 'Get a haircut!' I was kidding around, I really liked them. We started a little band at school. The guitarist was this guy Eric, very handsome, all the girls loved him. Someone came up and said, you guys want to play in our church, we said sure. We must have been terrible, playing Beatles songs mostly, maybe one or two originals. We were called The U-Men for University Men. And the response was so tremendous, the girls were yelling and screaming. We thought we were talented guys, but it was because this guy Eric was so handsome. Well nonetheless, right from then on I said, this is what I want to do, I was going to go into music. And at St. Johns I was a biology major, my parents thought I was going to go on to become a doctor."

Soon Eric became the first pothead Peppi ever met and stopped showing up for practice so Peppi recruited his little brother Mickey to take over guitar duties. "My brother was five years younger than me, 15 years old, he knew the songs. At that time you needed a cabaret license and had to be 18 to play in bars, so I forged his birth certificate and driver's license. My mother thought as long as he was with me it was all right, I was not a crazy kid, you know. So we were playing all the bars and then I informed my parents that medical school was not for me. I'm not even going to classes anymore, I'm hiding out upstairs where they have pianos at the different music departments, learning how to play and write songs."

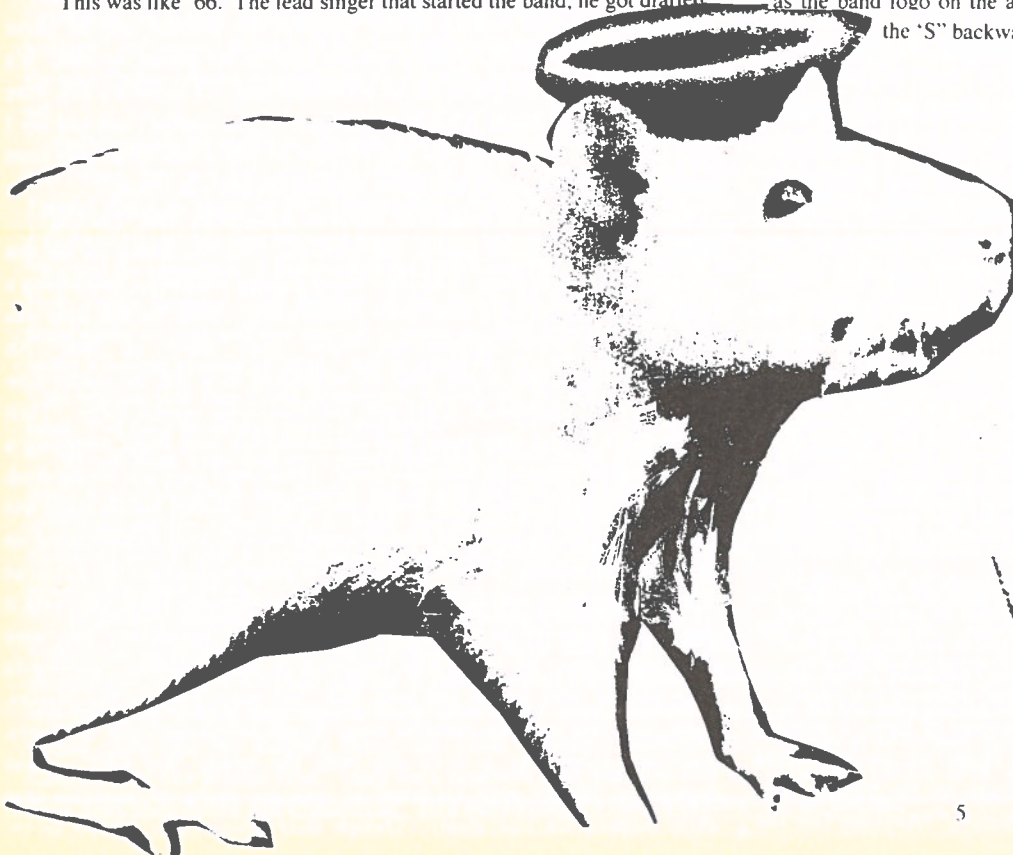
"When I told my parents I didn't want to go to medical school my father freaked out and knocked me into every closet, it could have been a scene in any Italian movie. My father was a little guy, looked like the guy on *Taxi*. My mother was going 'You're going to give me a heart attack.' So anyways, as soon as he got tired of hitting me he said, 'So you're going to finish up school and go to medical school, right?' I said, 'What was this all about?'"

"This was like '66. The lead singer that started the band, he got drafted

into Vietnam, so I became the lead singer. Before that he was the lead singer, I was the guy with the Italian voice to fill in the ballads. When I became lead I'd scream in a towel to try to get a raspier voice. I started writing some songs, they were awful. By then I was running into the city all the time, with whatever demo we could make, knocking on doors. Finally found two guys who were interested in the songs. They got us a record deal, and they proceeded to take everything."

Rob Haffkine and Barry Oslander were producers who saw in the Good Rats a chance to make names for themselves in the Rock & Roll world as super producers, a la Phil Spector, Don Kirschner or Kassenetz-Katz. Kapp Records was a label that had about as much to do with Rock as Lawrence Welk, making their bread and butter from artists like Roger Williams and Jack Jones. Their intentions were made clear by the album art on *The Good Rats* (Kapp KS3580, 1969). Open up the gatefold and you'll see two huge portraits of Ron and Barry and a third one of them in action, talking on the phone, and "producing." Tiny pictures of the band appear hanging off the tail of the giant rat that graces the cover. The words "A Ron Haffkine and Barry Oslander Production" appear in boldface bigger than the song titles. The band members' names do not appear. "Ever see the cover where they're giant and we're tiny, that kind of represents the way they thought the money situation should be, too. We didn't get anything for that record. We were the band, writing stuff, but they have the publishing, and they have their pictures on the album cover. They ought to be embarrassed about it because to this day I've never seen producers pictured on an album, let alone that big."

The band was still called The U-Men when they were signed by the would-be über-producers. Of course, at this point to have a college dropout and a fake i.d. teenager in a band called the University Men was almost a mocking of the Marchello parent's American Dream, so perhaps it was a good thing when the producers insisted on a name change. "There was the Animals, the Byrds, the Yardbirds the Beatles...we wanted to be an animal like everyone else, so since we were from New York we decided we'll be Rats." Not quite comfortable with the rodent connotations H & O convinced the boys to add the "Good," but Peppi stood his ground when the producers insisted "Rats" should be spelled "Ratz." H & O had the last laugh though, as the band logo on the album cover was a hand scrawled graffiti job, with the 'S' backwards making it essentially a "Z" anyhow.



When they began recording the album Peppi was enchanted with The Animals and his songwriting was heavily influenced by Eric Burdon's Blues styled rough tales of adversity. Like on all subsequent Good Rats LPs, Peppi wrote all the songs himself, but with one exception this time. One song he co-wrote with his new bride ("She never got a royalty either, but we're still together...when you think about it she's the real producer of the new band - I'm playing with two sons"). Peppi had been married shortly before the photos for the album cover were shot, and if you look closely at his tiny picture you'll see pasted on fake sideburns ("I had to be clean shaven for the wedding, I looked like...*Dustin Hoffman!*"). What also felt fake to him were the arrangements of his songs. He got a good deal on an arranger, to orchestrate a few things here or there, but to Peppi's dismay the producers had the entire album orchestrated with strings and horns everywhere. "This was not as heavy as the band was playing."

Despite Peppi's misgivings *The Good Rats* is a phenomenal LP. It's true that the mighty cult of loyal Rats fanatics often delete this from the cannon, considering the vastly different lineup that recorded *Tasty* four years later "the original Good Rats." But I wouldn't be surprised if a comparable number of Psychedelic/Garage collectors only recognize this LP and forego listening to the slicker 70s stuff. Whatever the case, one would be hard pressed to not love an album that starts off with a theme song that explains that despite rats being a "symbol of hate since the beginning of time," they are the *Good Rats*. Combining heavy, weird sludge rock with cartoon soundtrack music and a Dixieland break, the originality of this declaration of Rattiness is undeniable. As the song ends with motorcycle sound effects and "Pong"-like video game noises it segues into arguably the Rats finest tune ever.

"Joey Ferrari," based on a neighborhood character, is one of the best Rock & Roll ballads of all time. By ballad I don't mean love song, but rather "ballad" in the traditional Middle Ages/folk song sense, where the epic story of a hero or god is told in verse. What differentiates a true rock & Roll ballad from an old timey one is the lack of action; since the foolish immediateness of youth and the importance of Right Now are key elements of Rock & Roll, instead of *do* (as in do great things) the subject of the Rock & Roll ballad merely has to *be* (as in be cool as hell). Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" or Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl" may eventually do something in the future ("maybe *someday* your name will be in lights") but they aren't being celebrated in song for their accomplishments, just for their awesome presence and vibe.

"Joey Ferrari was a guy that worked in a gas station next to a bar that we played and rehearsed at. Just a greasy kind of an Italian kid, a mechanic, nice guy, heart of gold. I told him, 'I'm going to write a song about you.'" The 'heart of gold' aspect didn't make it into the final mix. With "a chip on his shoulder bringing him down" Joey was "raising hell all over town" and "looking for trouble wherever he goes (in) black shiny shoes and second hand clothes." Peppi's warns him that "the world's gonna wipe off that smile." Overall the lyrics achieve an amazing balance of sounding "street," tough and dumb while actually painting a very three dimensional portrait of a not-so-simple character. But even if the lyrics had been gibberish, this hard rocking, up-tempo (faster than you expect from anything this heavy) punk rock battlecry would still whoop your ass like a bike chain in a rumble. The lyrics, however, take it to another level, showcasing one of the Good Rat's greatest strengths: a juxtaposition of cartoon-like absurdity and a completely sincere delivery.

Despite the rough hewn portrait being painted of him, the real Ferrari loved the song and bought ten copies of the album. Peppi himself still recognizes the greatness of the tune, having recently re-cut it with his sons.

The rest of the LP also holds up well. "The Hobo" (released as a single, Kapp 946, 1968) is an interesting tune for the Summer of Love, a working class outsider's take on Hippie values ("I'm a Hobo, no account, living free"). Peppi's love of the Animals shines through on the Burden-esque tunes "My Back Is Achin' (And My Mind Is No Better)," "Anybody Got The

Time" and "If You Stay By Me." But the most dramatic tune is certainly "For the Sake of Anyone" where Peppi relates in dire tones that, "He was a good father to me even though he was dirt poor. I never once heard him complain...his whole life was my mother, he could never satisfy her..." As the melodramatic song climaxes tragedy and suicide and revenge all build to an explosive boil, ending with the singer's howling return home to his evil mother.

"I guess I was very much like the Black guys today who come from suburbia but act like they have a chip on their shoulder. That song about the guy whose mother cheated on her husband and the husband killed himself...my mom and dad are both alive and their very good people, this is just what you write about."

The Good Rats in many ways isn't as different from later Rats' work as it seems. Though Peppi believes the orchestral flourishes mar his vision, the excessive, almost schizo blending of styles and genres achieved by the strings and horns here would be a recurring theme on most of the band's best work to come.

The album did nothing professionally for the boys, leading to no money, no tours, and a cloud of disappointment that caused all the non-Marchello members to leave the band. However there were at least two things that resulted from the Kapp LP that made some impact. Most importantly the press the band got legitimized the pursuit of Rock & Roll in their mother's eyes (important for a band living at home and practicing in the basement). On the more ridiculous tip, a billboard of the cover art, with the boys hanging off the tail of a huge rat, appeared around New York, and had to quickly be removed because neighbors complained that there's nothing funny about a 50 foot picture of a rat!

Mickey and Peppi (referred to in the 'hood as Heckle and Jeckyl for their jet black hair they had straightened) went through numerous Good Rats over the next few years trying to assemble a group with some chemistry. Eventually they met bass player Lenny Kotke who brought with him a great guitar player Mike Raff, and a college boy drummer Joe Franco. Though Raff was a strong guitarist who drew positive attention to the band, Peppi recalls, "he just didn't have any brains in his head. My brother eventually had to beat him up and send him on his way."

"Mike Raff just had to go, this guy was unbelievable. On the hottest day of the year we were waiting in my basement for practice, and he never showed up, never called. Finally we got him on the phone, he said, 'It's really hot today I went out to get an air conditioner.' 'I know it's hot, were down here for five hours, it's a hundred degrees, you couldn't call and say I can't make it?' You know this guy thought he was a real tough guy from Brooklyn. Mickey beat the hell out of him and the guy was crying."

The apparently not so tough Raff was soon replaced by John "The Cat" Gatto, "this perfect guitar player, real good guy," and the lineup for the rest of the decade was in place. The Rats began gigging constantly, developing a huge fan base and honing their skills considerably. Soon the Rat style was established. What differentiates them from many of their 70s contemporaries is that at the heart of everything they did, no matter how poetic or self-important it might get, the Rats were regular guys. Their shows didn't climax with lasers and explosions but with Peppi emptying a garbage can of rubber rats into the crowd. These were guys you would drink a beer and watch a game with (Peppi swinging a baseball bat on stage and playing it like an air guitar, or tossing around an oversized football build on this sports fan theme). They earned a rep for jamming onstage, but not in an 'artistic' Prog Rock way or like the over-serious Grateful Dead, they kept it playful and lively for the blue collar Rock fan. Most importantly, they were never pretty boys; the Good Rats wallowed in their "ugliness," playing in street clothes, with beards and long hair...but never looking like hippies. Peppi, wore his unkempt mane at every length imaginable over the years sometimes topped by a wool cap with the words "Rat On!" Most memorably, Mickey grew his beard as long and bushy as mountain man while keeping his hair short. Though their music often related to the

grandness of the Glam stadium acts, if you even suggested these guys wear makeup or tights you'd likely face the fate of "Tough Guy" Mike and his air conditioner. The ugliness was driven home by Peppi's signature stage schtick - - he'd yell at and abuse the audience viciously, to their undying delight.

Their antics, look and sound drew attention. "Eventually we ran into a guy who was working at a radio station and selling drugs. He knew people at Warner Brothers and then, believe it or not, Warner Brothers records signed us and we did the *Tasty* record."

Their great fortune was hard for the boys to believe, and they were sure they were on easy street from then on. "Warner Brothers records? Bugs Bunny? That was the most impressive thing to me about Warner Brothers. They had drawn this great looking rat and put him next to Bugs Bunny. What kid wouldn't think he'd arrived. Bugs Bunny and Good Rats together on a t-shirt?"

Tasty (Warner Brothers 2813, 1974) had sleeve art featuring that "great looking rat," a grotesque cartoon rodent bloated on delicious garbage. Despite the comical cover, this was a very serious endeavor for the boys, one that Peppi and his Rat brethren still consider their crowning glory. Moving away from the raw Garage foundation of their debut, the Rats were now a bizarre combination of Prog, Boogie, Jazz-Fusion, Uptown, Big Band and Bar Rock. Having honed their skills with non-stop gigging they were super tight with Mickey and "The Cat" playing twin leads. Peppi still keeps it dumb at times just to remind you what they look like, but most of the album features poetic, literate lyrics, the best poetry being *about* Rock & Roll itself (including "Songwriter," a tearjerker where Peppi tells it like it is *about* telling it like it is). In addition to his songwriting skills, this album also really demonstrates what's great about Peppi's voice. It sounds rough and gruff like a been-there/done-that Bluesman (or the English equivalent thereof) but it also has a cleanness and sensitivity that infuses even the rockers with the heart tugging power of a love-song. The best tune on the album, "Fireball Express" could have easily been a coarse, thundering Rock Monster if Bruce Dickinson or Rob Halford sang it. But with Peppi's voice it maintains that urgency and power while keeping a patina of class shining all over the tune. Mind you, this isn't an album about classiness, it's about nastiness...but it's about nastiness with class! *Rolling Stone* praised them as "musicians in a time when non-musicians (The Dolls) are thought of as brilliant." Of course, Robot Hull in *Creem* said pretty much the opposite, but the way *Creem* reviews were written he probably never took the shrink wrap off.

Unfortunately the tenure at Warners was brief. After a short West Coast tour (where they met and jammed a version of Billy Cobham's "Stratus," with Tommy Bolin, as heard on *The Tommy Bolin Archives: Bottom Shelf, Vol. I* [TBACD 3, 1996]) they returned home to find that they had been dropped. "We had the reputation of being either the East Coast Doobie Brothers or the New York's Grateful Dead because of the loyalty of our fans. *Tasty* got tremendous reviews and was starting to catch on, then they just said, 'this is under a certain amount of sales,' and dropped us. So we were devastated. That was the first time I was devastated, finding out we were dropped by a label. I've been devastated many times since."

"People think when they get a record deal they have it made, you haven't made it until the check has cleared and people all over recognize you. We eventually got the rights back to *Tasty* and reissued it many many times," including an LP with a hotter mix, (Ratcity RCR8002, 1979), "and *Tasty* always does great for us."

Unlike the aftermath of their previous disappointing record label experience, this time the Rats were stronger and more united, and became committed to a Do it Yourself attitude if labels wouldn't help them. This was fueled by rocking huge crowds every night of the week. Locally they played clubs like My Father's Place, the 2,000 capacity Hammerheads, CBGB's, and The Bottom Line. There were countless other places to rock in New York state, Jersey and Connecticut. To a band today it's hard to believe

that an unsigned act could play to a thousand people regularly and be considered a bar band, but the 1970s were a magical age. "You see it was a different world physically. There were a lot more people at the age of partying. There are many more Baby Boomers than there are Generation X-ers. Number one, we were dealing with baby boomers. Number two, the drinking age was 18, now it's 21. Number three, the cops used to look the other way, and now they're looking for you. This was a time when everybody was partying. We were working six or seven nights a week, primarily in the Tri-State area. This is the most populated area in the country, and any direction four hours from where we live, we could still get home that night and not run up big bills. You know I have a family and I wanted to come home at night and sleep in my own bed with my wife. So we were able to do very, very well, play bigger clubs, and we played every night."

In '75 they started looking around again and got the attention of Danny Goldberg, "a big muckedy muck" who at one point was a publicist for Led Zeppelin. The Rats also eventually became involved with David Sonnenberg, Meatloaf's manager. The new management couldn't help them get interest from record labels, but encouraged them to start their own. Ratcity Records became viable when Peppi's Soulful voice helped them land a distribution deal with Platinum, a Black label out of New Jersey that scored with Shirley and Company's disco hit "Shame, Shame, Shame." "They had a fight with Shirley and brought me in to sing on the follow up, 'I Like To Dance'," (Platinum/Vibration VI-542, 1976). "Topless dancers used to come up to me and say, 'Oh yeah, we dance to that all the time.'" Peppi's foray into disco/lap dance music helped get their third album heard 'round the world, Ratcity/Platinum's *Ratcity In Blue* (Rat City/Platinum RCR 8001, 1976).

The album opens with the mighty "Does It Make You Feel Good," a Rock and Roller that brings to mind the best Peter and Ace KISS material. Peppi's raspy, Soulful vocals compliment the heavy pop grooves, and as a bonus he rhymes "cigarette wrapper" with "venus flytrapper." The rest of the album is a bizarre collage that goes from "Boardwalk Slasher," which sounds like a Journey song about a serial killer, to the title track, which sounds like a Manhattan Transfer tune about heroin. At points the album can be very accurately described as Boogie Prog, which is an amazing achievement. The ballads, the tributes to high and low culture (Bach, Bowie and Bogart are all name checked) and the hooks are all on point here. "Writing The Pages" is a three minute tune about the Hitler's inner dialogue during the one second between the bullet entering his head and death. Not average bar band subject matter, huh? Completing the package, the cover art, featured a classy rat in top hat and tails against the NYC skyline and the dustsleeve featured a pizza with the Good Rats' ugly mugs as pepperonis!

The Rats toured the country on that album, attracted more attention, and their skills and management's clout eventually scored a deal with Passport Records, which was distributed by Arista. For their next album they even had some "big names" produce. Well, maybe not *big* names, but great ones: Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan a/k/a Flo and Eddie!

The association with Flo and Eddie was a natural one; both acts dealt with absurdity while fully respecting the sanctity of Rock and Roll, and both acts could really sing harmonies. It also represented a potential breakthrough for the Rats. Despite sharing with the Rats non-Teen Idol looks, Flo and Eddie had conquered two arenas that Marchello and Co. hungered for. As the Turtles they achieved legitimate Rock star chart success, with the perpetual royalties that go along with it. Working with Frank Zappa they also knew the ins and outs of international, sustained cult appeal, something that exists many rungs above being able to pack Tri State area showcase rooms. While that circuit provided good short-term money (Flo and Eddie were surprised to see the Rats pulling in more dough than they were) it was definitely time to take it to another level. The optimistically titled *From Rats to Riches* (Passport S9825, 1978, released on Radar in England) was hopefully going

While Peppi stands behind *Tasty*, I have to back *Rats To Riches* as the classic lineup's finest recorded moment. The Flo and Eddie production must be providing a little something extra, as this is a super fun, ridiculous slab of Rock and Roll voodoo. The sweet sounding "Just Found Me A Lady" and the rockin' rollercoaster "Mr. Mechanic" (both released as singles) are two of their best tunes ever. "Taking It To Detroit" is a postmodern reconfiguration of "Detroit Rock City" (that actually mentions KISS' tune in the lyrics), "Coo Coo Coo Blues" is fun as hell, and "Victory In Space" manages to work in references to both Great Neck and Entenmanns baked goods!

The two most powerful songs lyrically have pretty good narratives behind them. "Don't Hate The Ones That Bring You Rock & Roll" was actually written for another 'Winning Ugly' NY area club act, Twisted Sister. The song is a plea to hecklers to appreciate the truly important folks. "Hate your mommies, hate your daddies...hate the rich oil companies...but don't hate the ones who bring you rock & roll!" The verses feature epithets hurled at the band by player hater "fans," including lyrics like, "Son of a bitch...prancing around like a goddam faggot." Twisted guitarist Jay Jay French was uncomfortable with the harsh language, so the tune, which actually works the words "twisted sisters" into the lyrics, ended up staying with the Rats. "I said to them, 'you guys are the bad boys of rock and roll and you're afraid to sing these lyrics?'" Peppi chuckles recalling the incident. "Dee Snider was watching us for nine years before he started yelling and cursing at the people like I was."

The other interesting song on *Rats to Riches* is "Dear Sir." The distribution deal they signed had Arista handling the album, and Peppi knew from the start that Clive Davis didn't know what the hell to do with the Good Rats. "We were never an Arista band. Who was the Michael Bolton before there was a Michael Bolton? Barry Manilow! Clive Davis knew *that* kind of stuff. He didn't know our songs, and we weren't about to change." "Dear Sir" is a musical open letter to Davis, ("I'd rather clean the cages at the zoo than change my songs for you").

The Rats were soon enjoying a tremendous industry buzz, and more great reviews, but again nothing happened. Seemingly Davis did drop the ball at that point, mishandling the band's career, releasing the wrong singles, mucking up the promotions. But perhaps they were the victims of a self fulfilling prophesy...what do you expect a man to do when you call him out on your record?

When the nutty approach didn't make them superstars the decision was made to go serious. Peppi had been working on a play about a counselor in an old age home who begins to resent the old people he fears becoming and his children who he can't be. The Rats management decided to morph the material into a concept album about the different stages of life. Goldberg and Sonnenberg listened to over 100 Peppi penned tunes and hand picked what they felt were the top ten. Sonnenberg arranged for the Rats to open for Meatloaf at Hammersmith in England and then do some recording for the new album at the Who's Rampart Studios. With the lavish production and tasteful material combined with good management, promotion, booking and distribution the new album was the Rats best chance yet, or so it seemed.

Unlike previous albums, *Birth Comes To Us All* (Passport PB9830, 1978) features cover art that is subdued and "classy," with a painting of a newborn baby's foot on the front and photos of the Rats as Greek busts matched with their pastel tinted baby pictures on the back. The dust sleeve features a photo of adolescent Rat-To-Be Gene Marchello. Not the strongest Rats album, *Birth* nonetheless has its highlights, including the Queen-like "Juvenile Song," the Rockin' & Rollin' "School Days" and "City Life" a Billy Joel reminiscer that sounds like a radio hit. And of course "Man On A Fish" is the tune that makes the Harley riders weep. But overall the package removed from the Rats what made them the Rats...tastelessness, crudeness and ugliness. This was a band that insulted the audiences and threw rubber rats like footballs...all of a sudden they were sensitive? While Peppi had always mixed in literate songwriting with the nuttiness, this swung the scales

way too far towards Maturity.

Though they performed the material to a crowd of 3,000+ at a triumphant charity concert at the Palladium (in which little Gene made his stage debut), *Birth* would, again, not be the breakthrough they waited for. Some critics praised it, but the *Village Voice's* lambasting (calling it "fatally tasteful" while hoping the Rats "don't piss away the emotional credibility they earned" as never-say-die Bar Rockers) may have been closer to the opinion of many Rats Fans. Needless to say the record didn't deliver the Rats to the mainstream, and soon after its release the Rats were once again divorced from a major label..

Also in 1978, back when labels did such things, Passport released a promo only live LP, *Rats The Way You Like It* (Passport SP20, 1978). The LP was recorded in Rochester, which in some ways would become to the Rats what Detroit was to KISS, a home away from home in a town where the fans and the club treated them like heroes. The rare album was much different from the sensitive *Birth*.

Their last big shot blown the Rats were on their own again and they went to where they were loved...the clubs. For evidence of their rock prowess check out the self released *Live at Last* (Ratcity, RCR 998, 1980), a double LP recorded at My Father's Place in Roslyn, a showcase room where Bruce Springsteen, U2, and the Police played to modest crowds on the way up. "It was the type of place where you see a band and six months later you see them at the Coliseum...unless they were the Good Rats. The Ramones opened up for us, Blondie, the Talking Heads. Cyndi Lauper, The Cars. There was a time that everyone that opened up for us became big stars within a year. We tried to figure out how we could open up for ourselves." The way this confident album sounds it's hard to believe the band had such self-doubts. Recorded raw enough to capture the live energy but slick enough to showcase the tight harmonies this is as good a document of the crowd pleasing live madness of the classic Good Rats as you'll find. It was also the end of an era as the "original" Rat lineup decided to call it quits, and Peppi and Mickey had to draw from the locals to fill out the Rat lineup for the first time since the early 70s.

In 1981 they released what would be their last LP for almost two decades, *Great American Music* (Gr Amer GAR 8003, 1981). Though the classic lineup is gone, Bruce Kulick (who played with Michael Bolton and then spent over 15 years in KISS) on guitar and Skyler Deal on bass replaced Lenny and John, and provided a lot of "umph." Despite the presence of new Rats, many Rats fans really dig this record, evidence that Peppi's songwriting is what makes the Rats the Rats. *Rolling Stone* gave *Great American Music* a glowing review, saying they finally captured their live energy in the studio. Peppi's songwriting is solid on this, and rather than going the concept album route this LP is an exercise in "write what you



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on
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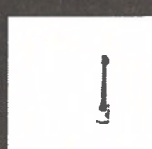


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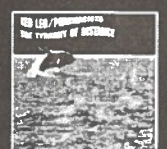
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ACID RODENT ROCK!

by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE

YEAH, FOR A WHILE THERE, IT WAS 'WHITE RABBIT' FEVER & RODENTS WERE HIP!



THE RATS HAVE A LONG & COMPLICATED HISTORY & WERE VERY HEAVILY CONNECTED TO DAVID BOWIE. ACTUALLY, THEY BEGAN IN 1963, FORMING OUT OF THE ASHES OF R&B GROUPS LIKE THE MAJESTICS & ROCKY STONE AND THE STEREOONES. THEY RECORDED A SINGLE IN 1964, "SPOONFUL" & HAD A BATTLE OF THE BANDS WITH A RIVAL U.K. RATS IN 1965. THEY RETAINED A SOUL MERSEY/MOD SOUND UNTIL 1966, WHEN FUTURE SPIDERS FROM MARS-MAN, MICK RONSON JOINED THE GROUP (TREW BOLDER & WOODY WOODSMANSEY ALSO HAD TENURES IN THE GROUP, AS THEY WERE ALL BASED IN HULL). RONSON WORSHIPPED JEFF PECK'S STYLE & IN 1967 THE RATS CUT THE SUPERB BIT OF SURREAL PSYCHEDELIA "THE RISE & FALL OF BERNIE GRIPPIESTONE", FULL OF BACKWARDS GUITAR & HIGH HAT. THE GROUP WOULD ALSO PLUNGE DEEPER INTO BLUESY GUITAR ROCK WITH "EARLY IN SPRING" & "MICK'S BOOGIE" (AS WOULD SOON BE HEARD ON BOWIE'S MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD LP.) MOST OF THE RATS ENDED UP AS 'THE HYPE', BOWIE'S BACKING BAND WHO ENDED UP LARGELY BEING THE SPIDERS FROM MARS... UNTIL ZIGGY DIED..

MATCHING MOLE

WAS ROBERT WYATT'S LATER & PERHAPS MORE DEFINITIVE GROUP, THAN SOFT MACHINE. THEY PUT OUT TWO FANTASTIC PROG/PSYCH/JAZZ GENRE-DEFYING LPS WITH WYATT'S COMMUNIST LEANINGS AS WELL. THE GROUP ALSO FEATURED OTHER LUMINARIES LIKE BILL MACCORMICK AND PHIL MILLER, PLUS CUTE LIL' MOLES LIKE THIS →



THE **SWAMP RATS** HAILED FROM PITTSBURGH AND CUT SOME OF THE WILDEST, FUZZIEST GARAGE PUNK EVER RECORDED. THEY TOOK ON OBSCURE TUNES BY THE LIKES OF THE SPARKLES AND THE GOLLINGGS, BUT THE ONE THEY TRULY TOOK BACK WAS THE SONICS' "PSYCHO", WHICH THEY COMPLETELY TEAR TO SHREDS, REACHING A HEIGHT IN DIRTY DISTORTION TOUCHED BY FEW.

the **RATS** (U.S.) CONSIDERED BY SOME TO BE THE GREATEST PUNK RECORD EVER, "RATS REVENGE PT. 1 & 2" IS CERTAINLY A LEGENDARY GARAGE FUZZ MONSTER. HAILING FROM AKRON, OHIO; THEY WERE FORMERLY THE DECADES. THEIR LIVES WERE CHANGED UPON HEARING THE MYSTICS' "SNOOPY" RECORD, WHOSE PRODUCER THEY SAUGHT OUT TO RECORD THIS FREAK-OUT SINGLE WITH!

MOUSE AND THE RATS

STARTED UP IN 1965 WHEN RONNIE "MOUSE" WEISS MET UP WITH KNOX "BUGGS" HENDERSON. SOON AFTER DAVID STANLEY (65.) JERRY HOWELL (OF) & NARDO KEN MURRAY JOINED THE FRAY TO PRODUCE THE CLASSIC DYLAN-ESQUE "A PUBLIC EXECUTION". FURTHER SINGLES LIKE "MAID OF SUGAR, MAID OF SPICE" & "L.O.V.E." FOUND THEM AMPING UP & CUTTING LOOSE WITH THEIR OWN UNIQUE BRAND OF GARAGE-PSYCH. MANY CONSIDER "MAID OF SUGAR.." ONE OF GARAGE ROCK'S PINNACLES, WITH IT'S BREAKNECK TEMPO AND OVERDRIVEN GUITARS. THEY RECORDED EVEN MORE PSYCHEDELIC FARE UNDER THE MONIKER 'POSITIVELY 130' CLOCK' WITH THE SINGER LISTED AS JIMMY RABBIT! ALAS, SUCCESS ELUDED THE BAND, AND BY 1969 IT WAS ALL OVER...



WHEN I THINK OF ROCKIN' RODENTS, THERE'S ONLY ONE NAME THAT REALLY SPRINGS TO MIND - ED "BIG DADDY" ROTH'S

RAT FINK ROCKS

IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, ROTH'S RATFINK CHARACTER WAS BEING DOODLED ON EVERY JUNIOR HIGH NOTEBOOK, AND CAPITOL RECORDS CASHED IN WITH THREE LPS OF HOT ROD SURF MUSIC. ED ROTH SAT DOWN WITH CAR CRAFT EDITOR DICK DAY AND A PIANO PLAYER AND WROTE SIMPLE POEMS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NOTED CALIFORNIA HOT ROD PRODUCER GARY USHER AND PHIL SPECTOR'S WRECKING CREW.



ROTH (AS "MR. GASSER") WAS CREDITED WITH VOCALS ON ALL THREE RECORDS BUT HIS ONLY RECORDED CONTRIBUTION WAS CHEWING CELERY ON "TERMITES IN MY WOODY." THE THREE ALBUMS, ALL RELEASED BETWEEN 1963 AND 1964, HAVE BEEN RE-RELEASED AS A 2-CD BOX SET BY ONE WAY RECORDS. "HOT ROD HOOTENANNY" AND "RODS AND RATFINKS" ARE BOTH GREAT RECORDS, BUT "SURFINK" IS THE BEST OF THE LOT. GREAT SONGS LIKE "RAT FINK HIGH" AND "FINKSVILLE U.S.A." CELEBRATE THE PHILOSOPHY... OF THE RAT FINK!

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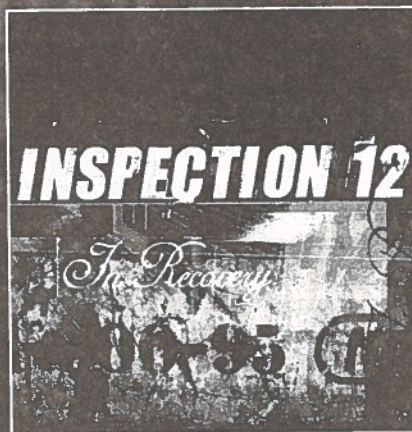
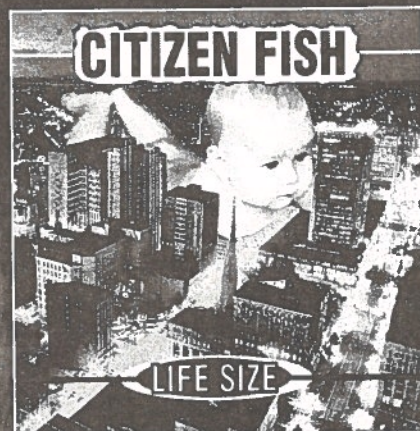
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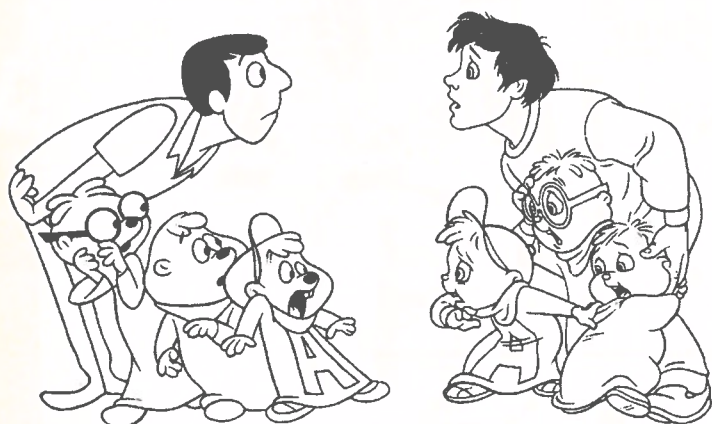


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MONDO CHIPMUNK-©



Alvin and the Chipmunks...to some they are the most annoying group ever, but to the pure of heart and good of soul they are beloved like few other combos in pop history. The most prolific and enduring novelty group of all time they have produced numerous recordings and countless imitators. Presented here is a celebration of their catalogue, their clones and their predecessors. This brief introduction should only serve to give context to the following, as the story of The Chipmunks and their tape speed brethren will be told in the following pages of reviews and descriptions by an international posse of cultural critics. Not all agree (some are anti-Chipmunks revival, others are open minded) but all understand the inherent greatness of the rodent rockers. This is, of course, not the "Ultimate" Chips Guide. There are more recordings out there to be found, more details to be uncovered, better reviews to be written. But for now this is likely the most absurdly comprehensive list you're gonna find. So without further ado, we present (after a brief overview) Mondo Chipmunk-O!

Ross Bagdasarian (b. 1919) an Armenian American novelty song writer/bit actor turned tape speed manipulation into gold when he had his first big hit with "Witch Doctor" in 1958. By recording at a slow speed while articulating clearly and slowly so that when the tape is played back at regular speed it will be a sped up, high pitched version of the voice recorded, he explored a comic effect whose potential had yet to be fully realized. He soon followed "Witch Doctor" up with a Christmas single recorded in only a few days that introduced three performing rodent siblings with an ambiguous relationship to their Svengali father figure David Seville (Bagdasarian's non-ethnic alter-ego). However this human came to adopt (or father) three chipmunks was unclear, but what was clear as soon as the record was released, selling faster than any single in history, was that Simon, Theodore, and especially the mischievous Alvin, were here to stay. For the next decade the Chips enjoyed success on novelty records, on TV (as puppets on *Ed Sullivan*), in comic books, as dolls, and as an animated television show. Bagdasarian retired the act in 1967 and worked on his vineyards until his untimely death in 1972. In the late 70s his son, Ross Jr. became interested in reviving the act, but no one was biting. After radio DJs began making Chipmunk parody records featuring sped up voices singing contemporary punk and rock songs, a grassroots movement built. In 1980 a small label released "Chipmunk Punk" with great success. Ross, Jr. was doing the voices and running the show now, and soon he oversaw a full blown revival that would never reach the frenzy of the first Chipmunks singles, but that would burn longer and more steadily for the better part of the next two decades. More records, a long running cartoon, videos, merchandising and more followed, and Ross and his lady (now wife) Janice Karman kept it rockin'. In 1996 Bagdasarian sold controlling interest in the Chipmunks to Universal, promised that a big budget Chips flick (like *Rocky and Bullwinkle* or *The Flintstones* or *Josie and the Pussycats*) and a new TV series were in the works. Nothing happened and Bagdasarian is now suing big time, as we are in the first lull in Chips activity since 1979. But have no fear, Alvin, Simon and Theodore will return! They are part of our cultural fabric, and are truly bigger than corporate America. And that is saying something!

CONTRIBUTORS: BA-Bob Abrahamian, JA-Jake Austen, JB-John Battles, KC-Kim Cooper (Editor, *Scram*, www.scrammagazine.com), DC-Dana Countryman (Editor, *Cool and Strange Music*, www.coolandstrange.com), PC-Plastic Crimewave (Editor *Galactic Zoo Dossier*, available from Drag City POB 476867 Chicago, IL 60647), RD-Robert Dayton (of Canned Hamm, www.cannedhamm.tv), DD-Dustin Drase, PG-Peter Gianakopoulos, EG-Edmund Graye, CL-Chris Ligon (co-owner of Chris and Heather's Record Roundup, 773.271.5330), JL-Julian Lawrence, JP-James Porter

CHIPMUNKS RECORDS

CHIPMUNK SINGLES

"The Chipmunk Song" b/w "Almost Good" (Liberty 55168, 1958)

This is the all-time classic that started everything. Every element is established in the brief 2:17 (originally it was 1:30, before Liberty records honcho Si Waronker [whom Simon is named for] made Dave is the patriarch trying to get his proteges to produce in the recording studio. Alvin (named for Liberty Records' Al Bennett) is the problem child who makes his "dad" yell at him mere seconds into the song. Simon is the smart one (his one solo line of dialogue demonstrates a fine vocabulary). And Theodore (named for Liberty's Ted Keep) is the giggling idiot. The tune demonstrates Bagdasarian's snappy pop craftsmanship, and also sets up the formula in which Alvin's attitude causes the record to teeter towards chaos, yet stay on point just enough to end up a solid song. Finally, the record strikes a balance between appealing to children and appealing to adults, a hallmark of early Chipmunk records. This became a Christmas perennial because it balances the irreverence of Alvin's mischief with an overall wholesomeness, making the record appropriate for the holidays but not too sappy. While this ostensibly is about materialism (the Chips each sing about what they want for Christmas, Alvin coveting a hula hoop) I think the vibe it really captures is the way family members interact during holidays. David Seville's turn as an exasperated father hopelessly trying to get his kids to play the part of little angels for Christmas really rings true. Alvin is really funny on this record (as is Simon, who arrogantly answers "Naturally!" when David says he was good) but I think the funniest bit here is when David says "Alvin, you were a little flat, watch it." Alvin keeps pushing Dave's buttons and pretending to not be listening 'til Dave yells, but notice that Alvin never misses a beat...he's in total control! Another really nice thing here is the accurate demonstration of the effect of one bad apple; at the end after Alvin opens the door to anarchy (they might as well put a circle around the "A" on his sweater) Simon and Theodore start acting out just as much! This record, by the way, sold 6 million cokes, and made over 4 and half million dollars, in under two months when it was released. (JA) Bagdasarian's studio wizardry didn't end with sped up nut grabbers. Naw, the B's of early Chipmunks singles had their own form of magic, under the guise of "The Music of David Seville." This B-side opens ominously with jungle bongos, then piano and reverb drenched handclaps join in. This persuasive percussion gradually turns into more of a party over its' 2 minutes and 2 seconds as David enthusiastically and periodically exclaims, "Hey! That's almost good!" Self-depreciation through under statement. (RD)

"Alvin's Harmonica" b/w "Mediocre" (Liberty 55179 1959)

The second chapter of the Alvin legend adds three more elements to the mythos: Alvin plays harmonica (though he really is more playing *with it* like a toy than playing it like Harmonicat). The Chipmunks are ladies men (Lyric: "We sure like girls, all kindsa girls, from Annie to Veronica, we like them small or fat or tall...and if we want to get a kiss we take them food or popcorn"). And we also learn that Bagdasarian has a charming but square notion of what constitutes Rock and Roll, as demonstrated by the kids adding "cha cha cha" to the end of the song. This record also features Dave getting more of a comeuppance than you'd expect. I guess he deserves it for his unsupportive, harsh tone towards Alvin, "Alright Alvin make a fool of yourself, play your harmonica!" But you gotta feel for him when it all falls apart after Alvin's rudimentary harp skills set off a domino effect of youth music chaos. "Now look what you did, you got them all cha cha-ing..." You know that everything is really going against Dave when he yells, "Theodore...Simon...Orchestra!" I mean, you don't have to be paranoid to feel like things ain't going right if the orchestra turns on you! Funniest moments are when Alvin annoys Dave by answering him with a talking harmonica, and then appropriately (for a foraging rodent) yells, "Ah nuts!" (JA) The non-Alvin flipside is the same concept as "Almost Good" but, obviously much more self-defeating and self-deprecating. No handclaps this time round but we do get to cha-cha-cha! David hems and haws and I-don't-knows all throughout the number until he tells the band to stop as he says, "...Wait a minute! I can't publish that! It's, uh, mediocre!" They didn't even get to hit the 2 minute mark! They sounded like they were having fun, too! No, it's certainly not mediocre and David's running commentary of saying that it's mediocre actually makes the song even less so and anything but! (RD)

"Ragtime Cowboy Joe" b/w "Flip side" (Liberty 55200, 1959)

On this number The Chipmunks sing about the "...high falootin' rootin' tootin'" Ragtime Cowboy Joe, punctuated by random gunfire. Party poopin' David tells Alvin to put the gun down. Is David so concerned with gun safety that he doesn't want Alvin to hurt himself? Is David anti-NRA? Actually, he just wants Alvin to finish the song. One must truly appreciate Seville's perfectionism. The number ends with horse gallops as Alvin yells, "Hi-yo, Alvinnnn....." The flip side is called "Flip Side" cuz that's what it is. It's also a very exotic instrumental! Ominous jungle bongos that stay ominous. Whistling kicks off a melody that piano and, later, a vocal chant of "Doo doo doo dee doo, ree dee dee dee doo..." follow. And more reverb hand claps! Has a bit of a Joe Meek vibe. When I hear this I see toucans. (RD)



"Alvin' Orchestra" b/w "Copyright 1960" (Liberty 55233, 1960)

Variations on a theme in the sequel department often use the "bigger is better" scenario. An orchestra is much more bombastic and chaotic than a harmonica. David develops a coronary when Alvin gets into conductor mode. David calculates the rental costs in his head and yells, "Alvin, will you cut it out! What are we gonna pay this orchestra with? Chestnuts?!" Alvin then passive-aggressively claims not to understand a word that David's saying. "Orchestra, will you please go home!" One can see the vein in David's forehead rise and pop out. The song itself is about driving along the countryside, a difficult activity to do when one has an orchestra in tow. The orchestra, since they were already hired, are put to use again on David's languid piano led B side, "Copyright 1960." I guess this means that David just threw his hands up in defeat. Time is money and the instrumental is only 1 minute and 52 seconds long. (RD)

"Coming 'Round the Mountain" b/w "Sing a Goofy Song" (Liberty 55246, 1960)

"Coming round..." is a weird record that half sounds like they're doing an eclectic progressive PoMo arrangement, and half sounds like they're trying on different arrangements for size. They open as an almost creepy marching band, then the next verse they get jazzed up, then they get kinda New Orleans on the next and then back to the marching band for the fade out. It's a pretty novel concept, with no narrative set-up or jokes, but maybe kids wouldn't dig this as a single. The flip is really David Seville singing with the Chips backing him up. But then during the instrumental break he whispers to the boys that it's going well, but Alvin isn't paying attention and starts messing up. As the song ends David is pleased as punch that there wasn't an argument on the record and then he makes the mistake of praising himself, which gives Alvin a chance to get back at him for calling him out for being "a little flat" back in '58. (JA)

"The Chipmunk Song" b/w "Alvin's Harmonica" (Liberty 55250, 1960)

This double A-side picture sleeve reissue is notable because the Chipmunks are still portrayed on the picture sleeve as "realistic" animals. Early Chipmunks records feature illustrations of rodents with anatomy that resembles a real live chipmunk. When the boys wear shoes or cowboy boots they don't fit on their oddly shaped paws. Years later Ross Jr. said the original Chipmunks looked like things that could give you rabies. Though there would be some variation (sometimes they wore clothes, sometimes their faces seemed more human) this was pretty consistent until 1961. Aware that the visual was limiting Ross and the production house spent an extra long time developing a new look for the animated version of the Munks. A year after this record they would be the cartoon Chips we know and love. (JA)

"Alvin for President" b/w "Sack Time" (Liberty 55277, 1960)

If Alvin was running against Kennedy and Nixon who would you vote for? He loved the ladies like Jack, but came from a much more wholesome family. He would have certainly played dirty tricks like Dick, but likely couldn't pull off the diplomacy with China as well (check out his attitude in Japan on the "Around The World" LP). Well, all I know is, if he ran in 2000 he woulda won in a landslide. JFK actually wrote a note to Alvin that read, "I am pleased to know that I have at least one worthy opponent." (WT)

"Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" b/w "Spain" (Liberty 55289, 1960)

The Chips drag David to the North Pole, where he's freezing, but they've promised him a surprise. And that surprise is Rudolph, who sings along with the boys in a voice that indicates his nose is red from nasal congestion. Dave, unimpressed, or on the verge of frostbite, retreats to a warm igloo before the song is over, missing Alvin's song ending bitch-

and-moan fest about still wanting a hula hoop. On the flip the boys are invited to sing with a Spanish orchestra led by a florid guitar. Alvin takes his time, then wails "OH *SENORI*..." once every few bars, almost randomly, as if he has no lyrics, but then just as they wind it up he breaks into a verse about a *senorita*, but is cut off by a heavy Spanish accent telling him, "I'm sorry *Señor* Alvin, you're too late, the song is over." This is followed by dead silence. An almost dadaistic piece, this is one of the gloriously weirdest Chipmunk tunes. (JA)

"The Alvin Twist" b/w "I Wish I Could Speak French" (Liberty 55424, 1962)

The 1962 Top 40 hit "The Alvin Twist" showed the hard-core commercial side of The Chipmunks. Not a "novelty" or children's record, it was a serious stab at mainstream pop radio success. No side stories, no yelling David Seville, just layers of piercing vocal harmonies on top of rocking Twist music provided by LA's best studio session men. (HY)

"America the Beautiful" b/w "My Wild Irish Rose" (Liberty 55452, 1960)

The boys sing a patriotic hymn and a drinking song! The former could drive you to drink and the latter could make you want to leave the country! (EG)

"Alvin's All Star Chipmunk Band" b/w "Old Macdonald Cha Cha Cha" (Liberty 55544, 1963)

The A side is remarkable because we learn that Alvin and his brothers aren't the only mutant human-esque Chipmunks...he brings in a bevy of them to jam with. The flip is one of the most charming Chip tunes (and a four year old album cut) where the Chips (over a pleasant pseudo Mambo rhythm) sing "Old McDonald," adding "cha cha cha" after every line (it doesn't replace "e-i-e-i-o"). The best part is the interactive portion where David tells the kids at home to do the "cha-cha-chas" and the Chips keep quiet. Try to not sing it! (WT)

Eefin' Alvin b/w "Flip Side" (Liberty 55632, 1963)

This is either a record that makes no reasonably sane sense whatsoever, or it's the single greatest example of a novelty record Natural Law inevitability. "Little Eefin Annie" by Al Perkins popularized an awkward, unnatural, pseudo hillbilly vocal gimmick where you kinda do a rural asthmatic scat, sorta playing invisible harmonica by wheezing and puffing, gulping and swallowing and expelling air, hitting two half notes on the exhale. It's hard to describe and not easy to do, though I think Southerners can do it birth. Mac Davis used to do it on his show, and one of the highlights of "eefing" has to be Jimmie Riddle's self explanatory "Yakety Eef." I don't know if it is ever supposed to have historically been done for non-comical effect, but basically if you put eefing on "Amazing Grace" it becomes a novelty song. So imagine how much more absurd this becomes when this is sped up Alvin style! This record is either Grammy material or a sign of the Apocalypse. (WT, CL)

"The Night Before Christmas" b/w "Wonderful Day" (Liberty 55635, 1963)

David Seville delivers a Be-Boppin "Night Before..." that sounds kinda like your math teacher trying to do a rap about integers to, "really connect to the kids." "Wonderful Day" is the follow up/sound alike to "The Chipmunk Song," and at the end when Alvin starts harmonica jamming to his dad's dismay (Dave: "*YOU'RE PLAYING THE WRONG SONG IN THE WRONG KEY!*") we learn a secret of the Chipmunks: Alvin only has moderately adequate chops. Maybe Dave *should* have let him play more. (JA)

"All My Lovin'" b/w "Do You Want To Know A Secret" (Liberty 55734, 1964)

Harmless rote covers of the Beatles tunes with no Dave and no edge.



Cute, but there is no Chipmunk flavor here, this might as well be The Chippers or Woody the Chipmunk. (JA)

"Do-re-mi" b/w "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" (Liberty 55773, 1965)

Though sales figures are not available to me, I suspect the album (and this single) where the Chipmunks sang along with a real live children's choir might have been their worst selling, because I certainly almost never see used copies. My theory is that some people can't stand the Chipmunks high pitched shtick, and some people can't stand to hear children singing, and when those cross sections overlap, you're doomed! Alvin, Simon, Theodore and the label must have loved these songs, though, because they appear again three years later on their movie tribute album. Of course, that was the album that buried their careers for over a decade. (WT)

"I'm Henry VIII, I Am" b/w "What's New Pussycat" (Liberty 55832, 1965)

"I'm Henry VIII, I Am" has a better guitar solo than the original by Herman's Hermits. (JP)

"The Chipmunk Song" b/w "Christmas Blues" (with Canned Heat) (Liberty 56079, 1968)

No one twisted Canned Heat's collective arms into doing this---it was actually their idea! During the sixties Blues revival, L.A.'s Canned Heat were one of the prominent names in the genre, right along with the Blues Project (from New York) and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band (Chicago). Unlike those other two bands, the Heat actually charted a few singles in the Top 40 ("Going Up The Country" is the best remembered). The band also had a broader sense of humor than the usual young blues unit---singer Bob "The Bear" Hite had a diverse record collection as massive as he was. Seeing as how the Heat recorded for the same label as the Chipmunks (who hadn't had a new release in awhile), Hite thought it would be a gas and a giggle to team up. This is one record where trying to describe it is like dancing about architecture, but I'll make an attempt: somehow the Chipmunks and Canned Heat find themselves booked in the

same studio at the same time, arguing furiously. Hite interrupts the Chipmunks' original 1958 "Chipmunk Song" with his own band's patented boogies, and after some resistance from Alvin, the Chips finally cave into the beat. I never thought I'd hear the word "psychedelic" coming from a Chipmunk's mouth (the cartoon characters. Not the actual



forest animals), but here it is. Hite made double sure that a copy worked its way to L.A. oldies DJ Art Laboe (owner of Original Sound, the label that virtually invented the oldies compilation), but airplay was not forthcoming. With all the soldiers not coming home from Vietnam, I guess there was precious little to laugh about that Christmas. (JP)

"Talk To The Animals" b/w "My Friend the Doctor" (Sunset 61002, 1968)

"Talk To The Animals" opens with Dave singing, and he's no Sammy. Then the Chips join in, curiously wishing they could talk to animals...yet they are animals! Perhaps that paradox is why Dave sings a bit more on this than he normally would. "My Friend the Doctor" has Seville doing an Irish turn (he kept away from ethnic humor more than most novelty tunesmiths, but he'll dive in occasionally) and he changes some lyrics to address talking to chipmunks specifically rather than animals in general. (JA)

"Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" b/w "Hushbye Mountain" (Sunset 61003, 1968)

Two playful, funny numbers from the Chips movie album. These aren't nearly as great as David Seville original songs (in which Bagdasarian's enthusiasm for the tune seemed to translate into funnier comedy and better Chipmunk singing, if you'd believe it) but you could tell that Ross appreciated kiddie showtunes more than Rock and Roll, so he is somewhat invested. (WT)

"You May Be Right" b/w "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" (Excelsior SIS-1001, 1980)

Ross Jr. takes over and at this point it's a welcome return. Though Billy Joel and Queen aren't exactly punk icons, this single from their comeback Punk LP demonstrates some pretty heartfelt warbling. (JA) The single they should have released from *Chipmunk Punk* was "My Sharona." When I spoke to Berton Averre, the songwriter/lead guitarist from the Knack I told him "My Sharona" rules and I liked the Chipmunks version better than the original. He did not respond to this comment. (HY)

"Call Me" b/w "Refugee" (Excelsior/Pickwick SIS-1003, 1980)

I can't tell if it's Simon or Theodore (I'm pretty sure it's the T man) hitting some sour notes on the harmony part of this Blondie tune. I really like the Tom Petty cover. Alvin sings the whole lead, with Simon and Theodore kicking in, with some sweet harmony this time, on the chorus. Alvin, however, is in his own world, and unlike the original incarnation of the Chipmunks, this time Alvin really wails the lyrics with serious heart and conviction...he means it. Though there's a sorta comedic break where Theodore asks Simon to explain the lyrics to him, Alvin pays it no mind and jumps back in, building to a rasping crescendo to bring it home. This tune really successfully cashed in on the concept of the Chips going "street." (JA)

"On The Road Again" b/w "Coward Of The County" (RCA 12247 1981)

Alvin changes Willie Nelson's tune into a lament about hating to tour. "Off the road again, I just can't wait to get off the road again, the life I love is playing *baseball*," Alvin somehow manages to even get his voice *higher* to emphasize his fave game, "with my friends, I just can't wait to

get off the road again." David Seville is actually being fairly tolerant, his protests weak and far between, but that's only because he has an ace up his sleeve. He finally lays his cards out, and threatens that if they don't sing the song right they are going to be off the road again for real...and they are going too have to go to school! As the sing the Redheaded Stranger's lyrics correctly one is left to ponder what the relationship is between man and beasts here...is he the benevolent father figure or is he really exploiting these kids to vicariously live his failed rock star dreams. Does he even provide tutors when they tour? His threat makes me fear that the DCFS (Department of Chipmunk and Family Services) might need to look into this. The b-side is an example of when the Chips likely *should* have changed the lyrics. In this version the coward's daddy still dies in prison. A shrill novelty rodent voice declaring, "Son my life is over, but yours has just begun" doesn't sit too comfortably. And the record is supposed to end on that lingering, poignant Kenny Rogers reprise of the phrase, "Everyone considered him...the coward of the county..." but somehow it doesn't have the same presence when sung in Chipmunk voice. (JA)

"Lunchbox" b/w "Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Chipmunks" (RCA 1230, 1981)

Lunchbox is a goofy tune in which Jerry Reed gets pitched a C&W song by Alvin that features the line "I've got a lunchbox full of broken hearts, a thermos full of tears." At the end Jerry tactfully passes on the tune by claiming it's too good for him, and he sends the boys Burt Reynolds' way. The B-side has a great bit that goes: Simon and Theodore: "Mamas don't let your baby's grow up to be cowboys..." Alvin: "Chipmunks!" Dave: "ALVIN!" Now that's funnier than Weird Al! (JA)

"Sleigh Ride" b/w "Chipmunk Song" (RCA PB-12354, 1982)

Perhaps the most uninspired Chips Christmas record ever. The generic backing track on this makes the high Chip singing (with no comedy/Dave/jokes) just seem like speeded up voices rather than real characters. Ross Bagdasarian Sr.'s playful music writing was as important as the vocal effects to the success of the records, and this proves it. (JA)

"Bette Davis Eyes" b/w "Heartbreaker" (RCA PB-13098, 1982)

The Chipmunks' "Bette Davis Eyes" instantly surpassed Kim Carnes' #1 hit version (1981). And just forget about composer Jackie DeShannon's original version on the "New Arrangement" LP, 1975. Jackie's hesitant vocals, the out of place roadhouse horns and limp slide/steel guitar created a lame loser. The "Chipmunk Rock" LP version of "Bette Davis Eyes" is introduced with a brief story in which the 'Munks, told to avoid Rock 'N' Roll, rehearse the Barbershop Quartet tune "By The Old Mill Stream" for an upcoming PTA performance. The (picture sleeve) single version deleted the story and went straight to seductive synthesizers soon complemented by Alvin's husky/raspy vocal textures. Dynamic harmonies and classic 1980's synth beats/hand claps made The Chipmunks "Bette Davis Eyes" a New Wave classic to be forever reckoned with. (HY)

"E.T. & ME" b/w "Tomorrow" (RCA PB-13374, 1982)

From Senior to Junior. From charming to charmless. This unofficial cash-in ain't nowhere near as good as Neil Diamond's "Heartlight." Product placement in this number includes McDonalds and Reese's Pieces. The melody is Alvin's radio signals to contact E.T. At the end of this bland ballad the space ship comes down. I hope that it's full of big, sinister aliens that will destroy these body snatched Chipmunks. They just aren't right, it's like they've been sent through a *Full House* filter (yes, I know this record is pre-*Full House*). On "Tomorrow" Fake David

weakly tells Fake Alvin to do his homework. Going through the motions. It was raining when I listened to this and I truly did not believe that the sun would come out tomorrow. Or ever. (RD)

"Achy Breaky Heart" b/w "I Ain't No Dang Cartoon" (Columbia 74776, 1992)

I'm glad Billy Ray Cyrus decided to work with the Chipmunks, he seems like a guy who can appreciate them without irony. The B-side is perhaps Alvin's most futile statement of indignance. (WT)

"Macarena" (English version) w/ **"Macarena"** (Spanish version) (credited to Los Del Chipmunks) (Sony Wonder, 1996)

Hands up, all four of you who thought that Los Del Rios would have another hit besides "Macarena," *THE* schlock party hit of that year. With something this gimmicky, it seemed inevitable when the Chipmunks turned up with their version (in English and Spanish, no less). If there were Chipmunk versions of "Who Let The Dogs Out" or "Whoomp! There It Is," I'd like to know. This is their big play for the dance music market---although it sounds like four or five Chipmunks on the record, only two are shown on the cover. In a nasty, dark-side move straight out of C&C Music Factory/Black Box (overweight diva on the record, skinny model lipsynching in video), the chubby Chip doesn't get to hang out on the CD cover with his thinner brothers. (JP)

CHIPMUNK LPS

"Let's All Sing With The Chipmunks" (Liberty LST 7132/mono LRP 3132, 1959)

The album opens with a funny and sophisticated joke right off the bat. The music starts up for "Yankee Doodle Dandy," and David asks if everyone's ready, to which Simon and Theodore respond affirmatively. Alvin isn't paying attention, so when David yells his name, Alvin snaps out of his daydream and starts mechanically singing, "Christmas, Christmas time is here!" The joke for the rest of the song is Alvin yelling "Spaghetti" instead of macaroni. The album balances the kiddie and adult audiences well. "The Little Dog" and "Pop Goes The Weasel" are very much kiddie songs, with some lines left out for tykes to sing along. But "Chipmunk Fun" has lecherous Alvin talking about his love for "pretty women." Best Seville rant of the LP: "Alvin, will you get out of that tuba!" It's notable that though the word "Rock and Roll" gets thrown around this LP, Seville's take on it is a swinging sax heavy square Jazz Pop with a polka beat. The album tracks are good, but this also compiles the hot hit singles "Alvin's Harmonica," "The Chipmunk Song," and the not as hot, but still great "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" single. All the early Chipmunk LPs came with covers printed on metallic foil covers so as to be extra shiny for the kids. The first few LPs also debuted with the Chipmunks in their more animalistic form. The original cover for this has them in vaudeville bow ties, vests, straw hats and canes while a cartoon Dave conducts an orchestra in tails. The Chips would quickly lose the old timey look and become contemporary kids (though their knock-off rivals the Grasshoppers maintained the Ragtime look for years). In 1961 the new designs for Alvin, Simon, Theodore and David were debuted for the TV show (they spent an extra-long time developing the new look) and this LP was reissued with the new Chips and the new David on the cover, plus the caveat "Songs from The Alvin Show." Alvin is still crooning on one knee as in the original cover, but now his pose mimics Elvis, not Jolson. This also was available pressed in red vinyl. (JA)

Sing Again With The Chipmunks (Liberty LST 7159/mono LRP 3132, 1960)

Though it doesn't have the power punch of having a couple of million selling singles on it, this funny platter is no sophomore slump. Prime shtick includes Alvin messing with Seville's mind by bastardizing "Home On The Range" with the line, "where the deer and the *cantaloupe* play." When Dave corrects him, Alvin responds, "Well I'm hungry." This LP includes the bouncy Bagdasarian original, "I Wish I Had A Horse," which features no mischief, but some really great rhythmic exchanges. The Chips also prepare themselves for the dialect humor of their next LP with this exchange: David: "Boys how would you like to do something Southern?" Theodore: "Like fried chicken?" Theodore: "Or cornpone?" Alvin: "Or Hamhocks?" David: "No, like 'Swanee River.'" Simon: "Well hush my mouth!" A nice moment is when the Chips ask David to sing "Witch Doctor" (See *MARTIANS & MIDGETS* section). "I don't think so fellas, I made that records once." "But not with us." Then they snappily go into it, with three harmonizing Witch Doctors instead of one. This LP features the singles "Comin' 'Round The Mountain" and "Alvin's Orchestra," plus the prime B-side "Sing A Goofy Song." On the back cover liner notes David writes, "...The Boys





(Alvin, Simon and Theodore) had a wonderful time making this record for you. As for me, I should be released from the hospital soon." This LP originally came with gold foil cover art and the realistic Chipmunks causing mischief by leaving a skate on the stairs causing David (a real life photo of Bagdasarian!) to fall. The post cartoon reissue has a drawing of David, as well as the new Chipmunks. (JA)

Around The World With The Chipmunks (Liberty LRP 3170, 1961)

Possibly the funniest Chipmunks LP of all. Though the previous LPs feature the all time classic songs, this concept album is rock solid. The Chipmunks are circling the globe and, if such a thing is possible, engaging in semi-innocuous ethnic humor (Alvin in Scotland upon seeing a bagpiper: "How come the man in the dress is squeezing an octopus?"). The absolute highlight is the amazing "Japanese Banana." I can't recall how many musicians I've heard praise this as their favorite Chipmunks song. In it Alvin craves a food they can't get, and to an Eastern melody decides to torture Dave with the refrain, "Can I have a Japanese banana, it would be so very nice, want a juicy Japanese banana, don't want the cherries and rice. We can see that they have so many things, and we are glad that it's so, but do they grow a Japanese banana, that's what we'd like to know." The banter between an embarrassed Dave and an indignant Alvin is some of their funniest. Alvin: "That's the worst banjo player I've ever heard." Dave: "That's not a banjo, it's a *samisan*." Alvin: "That's the worst *sam-i-san* player I ever heard." The other great song is "I Wish I Could Speak French," in which Alvin tries to pick up a *mademoiselle* by musically lamenting his lack of language skillz with the smooth cadence and delivery of Chevalier. It ends with her going for him, to which he responds, "*Oui? Oui?...WOW!*" In Italy a *gondolier* doesn't appreciate the boys singing along and chides, "Hey you-a mouse-a, pipe down!" To which Alvin responds, "Mouse! Mouse! I'm Alvin the Chipmunk!" Gondolier: "Chipmunk, shmipmunk, *silencio!*" After another exchange the boys (to the tune of "*O Sole Mio*") sing, "Oh *Gondolier*-o, we are not mice, we're singing chipmunks, we told you twice!" When Alvin asks the bagpiper to use his "octopus," the piper responds, "Sure laddy!" The boys then start "rocking and rolling," and Dave has the nerve to say, "You're playing in the wrong key, Alvin!" Imagine that...denigrating a child's *bagpipe* skills during his first attempt to play the thing! This record was available with an awesome foil cover, but I don't think it appeared without the cartoon Chipmunks, as many of these skits were animated in the cartoon that premiered around the time this was on the shelves. (JA)

The Alvin Show (Liberty LST 7209, 1961)

This album, the soundtrack to the TV show, features audio versions of comedy bits and songs that appeared on the very funny program. After opening with the bouncy theme song ("This is *The Alvin Show*, *The Alvin show...*") we hear the story of the Margaret Dumont-esque Mrs. Frumpington, an anti-Rock crusader from the pre-P.M.R.C activist group the Society for Quiet and Universal Appreciation of Refined Enterprises." Upon introduction Alvin comments, "And you are he head of the S.Q.U.A.R.E.s, I take it." She then (oblivious of the Chipmunks' identities) demonstrates what she sees as the most heinous of all music by playing snippets of the Chips' rockin' tunes, "Comin' Round the Mountain," "Old MacDonald Cha Cha Cha" and "Witch Doctor." Alvin begins to brutally curse her out but Dave stops him. So Alvin goes into plan B: "I decided Mrs. Frumpington was going to sing my kind of music whether she likes it or not!" He goes to her house, gives her a flower, then starts discussing nature while his brothers hide outside and play instruments. He has her consider her love of the wind through the branches (guitar plucking), the sound of the bullfrog (bass fiddle) and the birds (a fake woodpecker playing percussion). As she starts to get more and more swept up into the rhythmic groove he asks, "Do you like families? Don't you just love a baby, a baby...?" She responds, "A baby? A baby, a baby *baBY BABY!*" Now that he has her worked up he asks, "And how about a daddy, a daddy...?" "She has now lost control to the demon rhythms of Rock and Roll and starts screaming, "DADDY, DADDY, DADDY, BABY, BABY, BABY!" A full horn section kicks in as she works herself into an erotic climax, "*BABY BABY BABY, DADDY DADDY DADDY BABY BABY BABY! Ohhhhhh!*" She can't get out of the groove and howls her orgasmic Rock n' Roll vocals until men in white coats take her away. Thus, the most sexually charged kiddie record ever proves that everything this woman feared was true, Rock music is Satan. The album side ends by attempting to desexualize Alvin a little by reprising "I Wish I Could Speak French," but ending it by having Alvin's sexy encounter with the French gal turn out to be nothing but a (wet) dream. Side two opens with a TV interview. The boys sing a song (a new version of "Chipmunk Fun") to the reporter about what they like to do (play baseball, go swimming...watch *Guns*smoke). The song and interview end with David pleased at their good behavior, but as the TV dude signs off Alvin reprises the tune with new, naughty lyrics. "I like to break dishes and fight with the squirrels, I like to pull pigtales when they're on girls, we like to eat candy and talk in school. but we don't like to study math, arithmetic makes me sick..." "I knew it," laments David. Perhaps the squirrel line was a jab at their animated rivals, The Nutty Squirrels. We then meet Clyde Crashcup, a scientist character introduced for the cartoon. His humor is very Ernie Kovacs-esque, but it doesn't really fit in with the rest of the stuff. Dave then starts "Witch Doctor" solo, but the boys stop him and they sing it together. The album ends with a reprise of the TV theme, some goodbyes, and a few more Crashcup jokes. All in all, perhaps the wildest Alvin album ever. (JA)

The Chipmunks Songbook (Liberty LRP 3229/LST 7229 1962)

The Chipmunks from the start were perceived as perfect for kids, but also so clever and amusing that adults would groove on the jokes as well. Much of this is attributable to the sophistication of Ross Bagdasarian's humorous instrumentation and songwriting. As evidenced by the nearly instrumental b-sides of the early Chips singles, all the whimsy and humor of the group can be almost matched just by the originality of Bagdasarian's funny songwriting. However, after the Chips made their

TV debut, with new designs and more fleshed out personalities, their was a bit of a wake up call about the Chips' audience. Originally aired in prime time, a la *the Flintstones* or *The Simpsons*, the *Alvin Show* was a commercial flop despite its super high quality. It then moved to Saturday morning where the kiddie audience grooved to it for several successful seasons. This may have been a blow to Ross's ego because all the LPs released post *Alvin Show's* timeslot relocation seem more squarely aimed at the kids, and they now rely less and less on original songs and more on children's standards and covers of pop songs. The pop covers would prove to be the least inspired, but that was several years off. For this album, after the charming (though not particularly comic) original, "The Alvin Twist," we get a dozen or so kids songs/vaudeville numbers, with plenty of funny Alvin/Dave-isms. "On Top Of Old Smokey," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and "Bicycle Built For Two" are all particularly pleasant. At this point (and on the Christmas LPs to follow) Bagdasarian may not be composing as much magic, and his work may be less sophisticated than on his recordings with a broader audience in mind. However, his respect for the craftsmanship of the songwriters of yore seems to lead to inspired arrangements and a genuinely joyous execution. By 1964 (though 2001) inspiration would become rarer, as most Chipmunks records would be just rote covers of current hits. (JA)

Christmas With The Chipmunks (Liberty LRP 3256/LST-7256 1962/Mistletoe, 1976/? 1980/Cema 1994)

The four-year-old "Chipmunk Song" is repeated here from their first album. This LP has a humorous cover drawing featuring the lads opening their presents four days too early (according to a wall calendar). Seville's still getting as much mileage out of the Chipmunks' biggest hit as he can---four years later, Alvin is still asking for a damn Hula Hoop. As for the rest, when Seville is not yelling at Alvin & co. to keep in line, he gets a couple of solo turns, as do the Chipmunks themselves. There's even a guest vocalist, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, on the song of the same name. Highlights include "Here Comes Santa Claus," in which Alvin starts orating the lyrics like John Barrymore, forcing David to scold his overacting, and a straight version of "Up On The House-Top," a great tune for the Chipmunks style. Yuletide music at its kitschy best. The original LP has the fancy foil and the non-foil covers. The 1980 issue is the same as original but omits "Over The River and Through The Woods" and "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." (JP)

Christmas With the Chipmunks Vol. 2 (Liberty LRP 3334/LST 7334 1963/EMI 1994)

This is Seville showing his sentimental side. Though he tries to act like a tough on wax, you can tell his heart is bigger than the post-transformed Grinch's by just how sweet and straightforward this album is. Apparently the spirit of Christmas isn't something to be irreverent about, as there's hardly any shenanigans here. Sure Dave *tries* to get mad at Alvin when he starts improvising during "Twelve Days Of Christmas," but you can tell his heart isn't in it. But conflict like that is rare here, and most of these carols are sung with reverence. Dave even sings lead twice, on a sappy but earnest "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and on a Beatnik version of "Night Before Christmas" that sounds like your math teacher trying to do a rap about integers to "get to the kids." Overall a pleasant album, but definitely more of a real kiddie record than most Chips stuff Russ Sr. did. (JA)

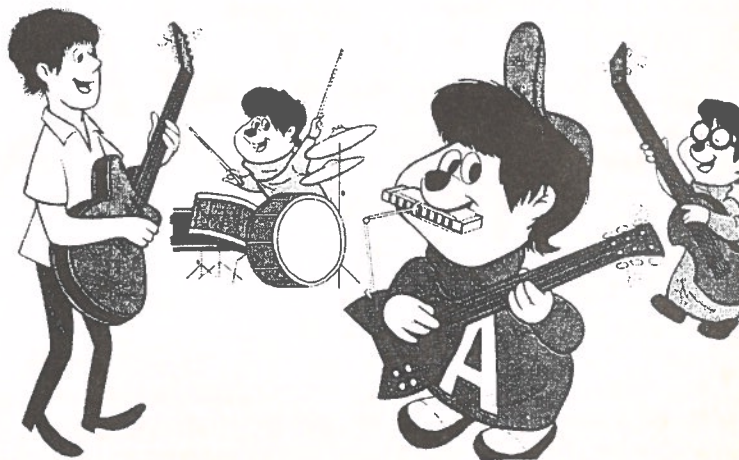
The Chipmunks Sing The Beatles Hits (Liberty LRP 3388/LST 7388/EMI Nutm 31 1964)

There are a number of old time Rock and Roll fans who think the Beatles ruined everything (usually citing "Sergeant Pepper" and the art-ification

of rock.). Well I'm not going to take a position on that, but I will say that they kinda screwed up the Chipmunks. For the first time ever the creativity and verve of Ross Bagdasarian is totally stifled. Of course it's funny that the chipmunks appear in Beatles wigs on the cover with Alvin holding a Beatles bass. But for the most part this is very much like the 80s chipmunk revival where they just did straight covers of Michael Jackson and Cyndi Lauper songs with slick studio musicians, sped up vocals and no real jokes or banter. And they don't even respect the Chipmunks continuity...on "Love Me Do" the harmonica solo is replaced with a melodica! Not surprising, considering Alvin is playing his harp backwards, with the wrong end in his mouth, on the cover. The most spirited track may be "Twist and Shout," where David Seville makes a brief appearance (mixed low) to tell Alvin his wig is falling off, and where they actually improvise some vocal arrangements getting a little more soulful than the Beatles. The best part of that is the scaling up vocals at the end which climax with atonal shrill Chip-shrieks. Seville is actually becoming less involved, which I guess is a good metaphor for Baby Boomer generation gap development. But overall the cover art is the whole joke, and this is the first uninspired Chipmunks LP. (JA, JP)

The Chipmunks Sing With Children (Liberty LRP-3405/LST 7405 1965)

Here's my theory: Some people can't stand the Chipmunks high pitched shtick, and some people can't stand to hear children singing. On top of that, showtunes like "Hello Dolly," hippy kiddie songs like "Puff (The Magic Dragon)" and songs that have had their definitive recording done and are in no need of Chipmunkization ("Que Serra Sera," "Tea For Two") are going to rub some people wrong. That's three strikes against you and that's likely why this record never seems to pop up used, meaning it's likely that hardly anyone bought it. While The Jimmy Joyce Singers are clearly not the all time most annoying kids choir, and while Bagdasarian's liner notes indicate he was genuinely challenged and excited by this project, Alvin really doesn't need the competition and this isn't the soundest concept. Still, it's one of the weirder Chips LPs, and if you think of the kids as the equivalent of the theremin on "Good Vibrations" you can consider this the Chipmunks "Smile," a doomed masterpiece that's years ahead of its time (so many years that it hasn't arrived yet, 'cause I still don't dig it). (WT)



Chipmunks a Go Go (Liberty LST-7424/mono LRP 3424 1965)

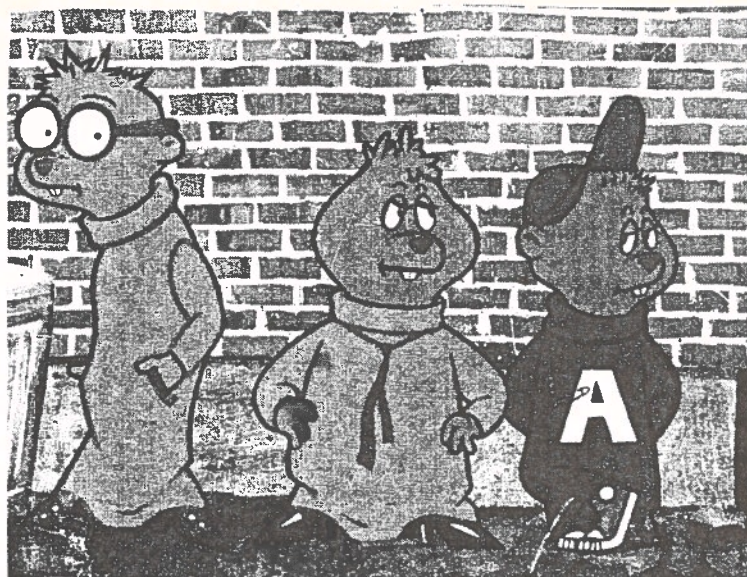
Remember the episode of *The Alvin Show* where the Chipmunks (and David Seville) appear on some Bandstand type TV program to perform "The Yellow Rose of Texas," with Alvin wiggling his hips Elvis-style to the delight of the girls present? And square Seville totally trying too chill Alvin's shit ("Come on, you know we don't do *that kind of music!!*") Well, by '65 the Chips were older and wiser and *rocked* while Seville wisely stayed in the background on his drum kit (see cover). Here, they play catch-up with their second all-rock album in a year (after the Beatles tribute, natch), with an album cover depicting the Chips and Seville rocking with go-go girls in the background. So are they doing any abrasive garage-punk or wyld soul? No, the song selection is straight down the middle of the road: "What's New Pussycat," "Mrs. Brown, You've Got A Lovely Daughter," "This Diamond Ring," etc. There's a surprising cover of George Jones' "The Race Is On," but that's probably because lounge singer Jack Jones had a version around this time. Dobie Gray's poppish "The In Crowd" is the closest the Chips come to soul music (could you see them doing "My Girl" or "Respect?" Maybe "Baby Love"...), while the nearest to rowdy rock we get is Dino, Desi & Billy's "I'm A Fool." "I'm Henry VIII, I Am" even has a better guitar solo than the original by Herman's Hermits. No "Louie, Louie" or "Wipe Out"...but even when they were trying to, they never really could master that kind of music. (JP)

The Chipmunks see Doctor Dolittle (Sunset/Liberty S-5300, 1968)

Note the title isn't "The Chipmunks *SING* Doctor Dolittle," but rather "...*SEE* Doctor Dolittle." The narrative here is great, the Chips have just seen the movie and they are STOKED! Understand that at the time the pre-release hype on "Doctor Dolittle" had everyone ready for this big budget flick to have the impact "Star Wars" would a decade later. It didn't happen. But everyone committed to tie ins before the film flopped. Thus a lot of big names invested: The Chips, Sammy Davis Jr and Bobby Darin rushed out LPs covering the songs from the film, and Dr. Seuss' imprint published a series of books. The movie ended up being a legendary financial disaster, but that doesn't mean quality stuff didn't come out of it. This LP likely tanked commercially, but it's a ton of fun! Dave takes the boys to the movie, but they beg to see it again. He then challenges them to take a Dr. Dolittle test, and if they pass they can go again. Thus, they spend the LP joyously recounting the story and the cool parts of the movie, and of course, singing all the songs with David. As opposed to the pop cover LPs where Seville is a non-entity, this is all about the warm, loving relationship David and his kids have. Some of the lyrics are altered to be specific to Seville talking with the Chipmunks. There's not much bratty acting up here (though Alvin delights in squealing like a pig on the last note of Dr. D's theme). And as a reward for their good behavior, and good singing, at the end Dave takes them back to the theater for another Push me-Pull you fix! Note that the Chips are now on Liberty's budget imprint, Sunset, an indicator of their fading commercial appeal. (JA)

The Chipmunks Go To The Movies (Sunset, 1969)

I really like this record because it makes me feel like David Seville really has fun with his kids, taking them to the movies and being a good friend. Mostly it's the cover art that does this for me: They look the happiest they've ever been crossing the street to go to a big movie theater with searchlights and palm trees and the whole shebang. As they cross the street Dave is holding their hands like a responsible parent (of course Alvin is running wild...Dave only has two hands!). The songs are great, from "Oliver," "The Wizard of Oz," "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" and other family friendly flicks. Highlights include "Consider Yourself," "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" and *The Bare Necessities*. (WT)



Christmas with the Chipmunks (United Artists 1974)

A retread of previously trod Christmas snow, not a real new album. Don't think they were back, and don't let the fact that they were seemingly on a big label fool you. The Chips were down and out and were going to have to claw their way back to the top....and it wouldn't happen for years to come. (WT)

Chipmunk Punk (Excelsior/Pickwick XLP-6008 1980)

This is the album that brought them back, based on some anonymous DJ's comedy routine. Although NBC was briefly showing reruns of *The Alvin Show* in the 70s, at this point the Chipmunks were a distant memory for people 25 and over. Connecting these novelty record kings with the punk movement looked like the ultimate hipster joke. With Ross Bagdasarian dead, Ross, Jr. took over the reins, with mixed results. Just like their "Go Go" LP in the 60s, their taste in rock wasn't particularly adventurous, with Knack songs, two by Blondie, one by Tom Petty, and one Cars, plus fake new Wave from outsiders-looking-in Billy Joel, Linda Rondstadt and Queen. Although some of the racier words were toned down, this LP doesn't "make cute" for the children. What's funniest about this record (which removes the Seville/father figure) is that the songs are all sung with deadpan, heart felt conviction, even though they are in Chipmunk voices. As far as punk cred, of course the 3 years late "New Wave" examples here don't have much to do with underground Bad Brains or Dead Kennedys action that was going on from coast to coast in 1980. But to dismiss the punk-as-hell absurdity of this album is a mistake. When a VH1 documentary recently used the cover of "Chipmunk Punk" as an illustration of a nail in the coffin of punk, they clearly were demonstrating that they didn't really understand the Ramones. The production is a lot cheesier than on the old Liberty LPs. When Bagdasarian, Sr. recorded the original albums he'd enunciate extra s-l-o-w and bassy at a low pitch, so that Alvin, Simon and Theodore came out bright and clear at the higher speed. Even with their voices in the stratosphere, you can clearly make out every word being said. On "Chipmunk Punk" the voices came out whiny and garbled. It's still a good joke as far as it goes, and Doug Oudekerk's raw cover art, with Alvin in an alley looking like a real badass, is a last-ditch attempt to capture the Chips in their rowdy element, before they got all cuddly and Smurfy. (JP)

The Twelve Days Of Christmas with the Chipmunks (Pickwick SPC-1035 1980)

This is "Christmas w/ the Chipmunks Vol. 2" with new title & art. (WT)

Urban Chipmunk (RCA AFLI-4027 1981)

As a follow up to "Chipmunk Punk" this is good, but not nearly as great. While the jokes are all funny here (laughs would become rarer a few years later, I don't know if Ross Jr. only had so much funny in him or what) but the songs aren't magic. Still, 70s/80s Country Pop is pretty Chipmunk friendly. Not a lot of David Seville here, but during "Thank God I'm A Country Boy" Dave yells at Alvin to be quiet... it's 2 in the morning! On "The Gambler," Alvin bums a Twinkie, not a cigarette (Shirley, Squirrelly and Melvin, who replaced Alvin at Excelsior when the Chips left for RCA, recorded this the same year with Marlboros intact). This record also brings back the Canned Heat concept of guest stars. Jerry Reed gets pitched a song by Alvin that features the line "I've got a lunchbox full of broken hearts, a thermos full of tears" and Brenda Lee gets a marriage proposal from Alvin, to which she sings in response, "You're a chipmunk, I'm a lady, we don't have much in common..." At the end Alvin convinces Brenda he's worthy, and I guess this album did the same for me. Note: Dolly Parton doesn't appear on this record, but she would appear (in animated form, lending her voice) on the Alvin cartoon revived shortly after this came out, on an episode entitled, "Urban Chipmunk." (JA)

A Chipmunks Christmas (RCA AQL1-4041, 1981)

This has the modern age Chips returning to their Christmas roots on an album heavy with dialogue, but low on the zing one expects from the spoken word portions of Chipmunks LPs. That's partially due to the fact that "special guest" Santa Claus doesn't have as short a temper as Dave, and that when Dave (voiced by Ross Jr.) does speak it's in the woosiest tones imaginable. This accompanied an animated TV special of the same name, and it represents the new, warmer Chipmunks that would be successfully revived in a TV series soon after. The story length narrative has Alvin giving his harmonica to sickly Tommy so he'll get better, and then scheming to avoid telling Dave where his harp went. The only really funny part on this is when Alvin, after having first met the deathbed bound Tommy, and before reviving his spirit with his gift, has to rehearse, "The Chipmunk Song." He is so depressed he sings "Christmas, Christmas time is here..." in a somber, dragging voice, an absurd juxtaposition of lyrics and approach. There is also an attempt to revive the Clyde Crashcup character from the old cartoon (I don't think he appeared on the new cartoon). They mostly do standards, and the original, "The Spirit Of Christmas," is *awful!* A nice touch is Santa telling you at the end of side one, "OK kids, time to turn the record over." I wonder what they did with that when Sony reissued this on CD. (JA)

Chipmunk Rock (RCA AFL1-4304, 1982)

In the prolific period between their "Punk" revival and their animated explosion, the Chips did lots of covers, and while there's no comparison between this stuff and the genius early work, the quality here is far superior to material that would come soon. If you toss out the sentimental X-mas LP from the previous year, "Punk," "Urban" and "Rock" actually make up a pretty solid body of work, as the covers they do really fit perfectly with the Chip-voice concept. On this record, "Take A Chance On Me," "Jessie's Girl" and "Whip It" sound pretty solid. The most significant development here is the semi-introduction of the characters that would become the equals of the boys, "The Chipettes." Unlike the true Chipettes, however, on this album it's just A, S & T in drag!!! (Alvin: "You guys aren't getting me to put that wig on!") Though the cover art is now featuring the cutesy Chipmunks (as opposed to the brilliant earlier designs, or the raw "Punk" creatures) the artwork is still kinda funny. The back has them rocking on stage (a ripoff of the Shirley, Squirrelly and Melvin LP!) but the inner gatefold has illustrations for song

titles including one for "Whip It" that has them in Devo hats eating whip cream in space, one for "Leader Of The Pack" with Alvin on a Big Wheel leading a motorcycle gang on Harleys, and one for "Heartbreaker" with Alvin laying on his bed, surrounded by mail, with his walls covered with pictures sent to him by hot, adult, human women fans, as he's flips through his "Little Black book Vol. III" while calling a hottie on the phone. Player! (JA)

Chipmunk Mania (K-Tel NC 560, 1982)

Budget compilation of early Chipmunk hits, also including "Witch Doctor." The B is all Beatles compositions from their Beatles LP. The album jacket features cheaply drawn Chipmunks rocking out in Beatles wigs set against a plain blue backdrop. In the lower left corner, big, pink hands reach out for the lads. (RD)

Chipmunks Go Hollywood (RCA AFL1-4376, 1982)

Uninspired, uncharming covers of 80s and 70s movie songs and showtunes. The original tune here, and the single, is called "E.T. and Me. Let's just say if E.T.'s service used this LP as on-hold muzak, he'd probably be less excited to phone home. (EG)

The TV Chipmunks (1983)

Alvin Goes Wild (1984)

The Chipmunks Cruise (1984)

The Chipmunks Join the Circus (198?)

The Chipmunk Story (1984)

May The Best Chipmunk Win (1984)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Carroll (1990)

This kids books also came with Books On Tape versions of the stories. My fave is "May The Best..." which is a battle of the sexes between Chipmunk and Chipette. (WT)

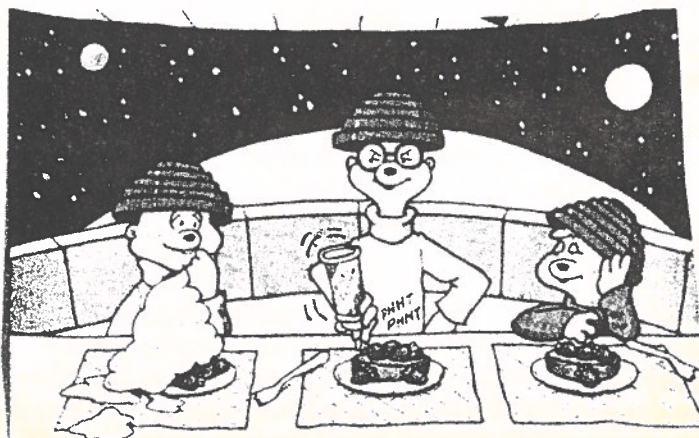
Songs From Our TV Shows (Polystar PTV4 1040, 1984)

On the cover Simon and Theodore are depressed because their show is on a wall of televisions and it's only showing Alvin. They look like they're contemplating becoming the two Destiny's Children who got kicked out.

Highlights include their covers of "Beat It" and "Surfin USA" and the original, "There's No Rock and Roll On Mars." (WT)

Munk Rock (EMI 1985)

No, this isn't the Chips doing all covers of the German/US proto punk band the monks (although I'd love to hear Alvin sing, "I hate you with a passion baby...but call me !"). This is just reissues of various Chipmunk rock n' roll covers from their Beatles LP and their Go Go LP, plus a cover of "California Girls," which David Lee Roth had a hot version of at the time. (WT)



The Chipmunks Songbook (EMI SLLB-9443, 1986)

Different than Liberty title, this was a TV Offer double LP (eventually a double CD as well) that features lots of old school Chipmunk songs, with more late 60s stuff than late 50s/early 60s material. (JA)

Christmas With The Chipmunks (United Artists UA-LA352-E2 1987)

This is Liberty Vol 1 and Vol 2 as a double LP with front cover art from each on either side of the jacket. (JA)

Born To Rock (Quality 1988) w/The Chipettes

This is the only record I've seen credited to The Chipmunks and the Chipettes, giving equal billing to the gals that helped make the tepid 80s cartoon a success. The Chipettes (Brittany, Jeanette and Eleanor) were worthy foils to the boys on TV, but at times they can be confusing on CD/cassette, because it's hard to tell who the heck is who. Of course, it opens up the door for covers of the Bangles, Aretha and other ladies. Speaking of Aretha, this album's art features the six creatures in 50s Grease get-ups lounging on the "Pink Cadillac," rendered in punky *Manga* style expressive art. Theodore is driving, Alvin is posing on the hood in shades with a guitar, Simon is leaning on the car, and the girls are spread out on the hood like a ZZ Top video. I think it's very notable that Ms. Spears wasn't the original kiddie pop Britney...but I'm also pretty sure that the Pepsi Princess is 20 or so, and wasn't actually named after her Chipette predecessor. Anyhoo, on to the music: though this opens with a great cover of George Michael's "Faith," the kids kinda keep it old school by covering current songs that are actually covers of songs that were out during the Chips 50s-60s heyday ("La Bamba," "Mony Mony," "Venus"). And the other stuff is fine, I mean, does, "Heaven Is A Place On Earth" get worse because of squeaky, screechy sped up rodent warbles? How could it be? The other choices in this oddball mix include Willie ("Always On My Mind"), Whitney ("I Want To dance With Somebody") and Michael ("Bad"). (EG)

Rockin' Through the Decades (EMI/Capitol 1990)

Sure you get your "Witch Doctor" but you also get covers of 50s ("Tutti Frutti," "Oh, Pretty Woman," "Heartbreak Hotel") 60s ("She Loves You," "Satisfaction," "Surfin' Safari"), 70s ("Crocodile Rock") and 80s ("Beat It"). The big "hit" on this album is the Chipettes doing what would be their signature cover song, "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," and though most Chipmunks covers in this era are fairly unadventurous, at least this has the humor of referencing Cyndi Lauper, a woman who was obviously heavily influenced by the Chipmunks. (WT)

Chipmunks Greatest Hits (Curb 1992)

Drawing heavily from the first LP, this also features a bunch of tracks from the Beatles covers album. Though this doesn't take into account the 80s revival (some would call that a bonus) this does have historical liner notes (by Don Ovens). (WT)

Chipmunks In Low Places (Sony Wonder 1992)

Recorded in Nashville, with a bunch of studio hotshots (including Billy Burnette and Jai Winding), this is the Chips response to "New Country," the post-Garth phenomenon that produced some serious radio friendly hits natural for the boys to latch unto. Born out of the "New Traditionalist" Country music of George Strait and Randy Travis in the 80s, the new "Hat Acts" seemed at first to be somewhat earnest, but soon revealed themselves to be cynical, calculated, manufactured products far more gimmicky than a cartoon rodent act. But in the early 90s it was still possible to see a link from the Country Gold of the 60s and 70s to the contemporary stuff, and this album, with old and new and a few originals thrown in, does just that. What's really notable about this album as far as Chip-history goes is the parade of famous human guest stars. Though they had done the Canned Heat single, and the "Urban Chipmunk" LP, neither of those led to human/rodent unions becoming regular. After this they would share studios with numerous A-list bi-peds. The "hit" here,

and the most natural New Country" song for the boys, is "Achy Breaky Heart" (with Billy Ray Cyrus). Other star turns include "There Ain't Nothing Wrong With The Radio" (with Aaron Tippin), "Stand By Your Man" (with Tammy Wynette), "Outlaws" and (with Waylon Jennings). Notable for the future is "Brothers And Old Boots" with Charlie Daniels, who would *not* appear on "Devil Went Down to Georgia" on the Chips follow up album the next year (perhaps they argued politics...I hear the Chipmunks are pro-gun control) and "Don't Rock The Jukebox" with Alan Jackson, who the kids would release an X-mas record with the next year (see *Chipmunks Guest Appearances*). (WT)

The Very Best of the Chipmunks (Cema 1993)

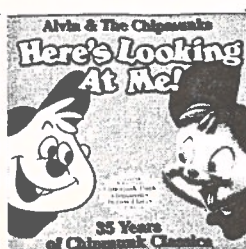
A knockoff cheap-o of Chip oldies from the Liberty days. (WT)

Here's Looking At Me!: 35 Years of Chipmunk Classics (Chipmunk/Sony 1993 LK 57821)

This collection celebrating the Chips reaching middle age certainly wasn't compiled by Rhino, or any other archivist label, as even the old songs are inferior remakes by the new Seville-less Chipmunks, with hard to discern voices, and Chipette guest shots. There's a few that are still strange enough to be enjoyed; "Woolly Bully" features a gruff monster (the Woolly Bully, I suppose) rumbling the chorus, and "Leader of The pack" features the Chipettes singing about a motorcycle riding Alvin who I guess dies in a motorcycle crash). Also, it's interesting to have the theme song for the 80s TV show on CD (though I would have liked to have the old theme song on it, too). But, alas, most of the selections are covers of Billy Joel, Michael Jackson, Madonna and the like. Even the modernized version of "The Chipmunk Song" is kinda bad, with the only cool thing being Alvin complaining that he's been asking for the hula hoop for so damn long that he really wants other stuff now, but by this point he needs that hoop just to maintain his sanity. Then he gets it! Dave coughs up the elusive hula hoop! Historic indeed, but it's still pretty bad sounding. The only really notable feature of this album is that the cover and interior art feature the new Smurfified, rad, cutesy, airbrushed Alvin meeting the flat colored, funny looking 60s TV show Alvin. Of course, if they were being more accurate, the actual animal Chipmunks would appear, but that's too much to ask for. (JA)

Urban Chipmunk (Chipmunk Records 1993 LK53435)

This revamped reissue of the 1981 album drops the Brenda Lee song and "Luckenback, TX" and adds "Boot Scootin' Boogie (unremarkable) and "The Devil Went Down To Georgia." The latter (which kicks this whole thing off) is *AMAZING* in it's bizarreness. This CD's new Alvin seems a little harder edged than his mischievous predecessor (and much moreso than his current TV incarnation). He wagers not only *his own* eternal soul with Satan, but throws in his fellow Chipmunks' souls as well, eliciting Theodore (or maybe Simon, I can't tell 90s Chipmunk voices apart) to declare "*You idiot!*" In this version, of course, the Devil plays harmonica, not fiddle, and Alvin does out blow him at the end, demonstrating previously unshowcased chops. The cover art to this updates the original by making Alvin the cuter, but more rad (he has a devilish look rather than a dumb, happy one) version. He also is now balancing on the bar stool on a Nashville Yellow Pages, and has a stick of gum in his rolled up shirt sleeve like a cigarette pack. (JA)



Schools Out For Summer (1994)

Ragtime Cowboy Joe (1994)

Working On The Railroad (1994)

These cassettes are part of Alvin's Video Audio fun-packs, featuring a VHS tape of TV cartoon adventures and an audio only sing-a-long tape. Despite the Alice Cooper theme title of the former, you can believe that Alvin isn't dressed in Horror Glam chic, but rather in 80s "rad" suburban skatewear. (WT)

When You Wish Upon A Chipmunk : The Chipmunks Sing Songs From Classic Disney Movies (Sony/Chipmunk 1995)

This is for the kids, so of course it's heavy on the new school Disney stuff ("Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast" songs, and a version of "Hakuna Matata" from "The Lion King" in which the Chipmunks prove that even they aren't as annoying as Nathan Lane). In fact, it's hard to accept the term classics when applied to "Aladdin" and "Pocahontas." But the kids also get down with some "He's A Tramp" (from "Lady And The Tramp"), "When You Wish Upon A Star," (from "Pinocchio") and especially the appropriate "Three Caballeros," (who's a greater trio than A, S & T?). The cover art here is notable, as Alvin is the giant genie from Aladdin, Simon is Pinocchio and poor, fat Theodore is in drag as Tinkerbell! (WT)

The Easter Chipmunk (TW Kids 1995)

Alvin's Daydreams (TW Kids 1995)

These are "Comes To Life Books," 24 page kids books with computer doodads in them so that when you place a special machine (a/k/a "the storydisc") on each page of the book (a/k/a "the storyteller") the audio of the stories is "interactively" heard. "Daydreams" features a revival of "Alvin For President." (WT)

A Very Merry Chipmunk (Sony Wonder 1995)

Yet another X-Mas album, but on this one, while reviving a number of previously recorded classics ("Christmas Don't Be Late," "Rudolph," etc.) we also get an ominous nod to the nineties here with both a Dianne Warren song(!) and a tune that many may consider a torturous marriage made in a deep recesses of Hell. Yes, it's Celine Dion & The Chipmunks doing "Petit Papa Noel" (now going bilingual, the boys are a lot more cosmopolitan and sophisticated then they were in 1961 when their "Around The World" LP made them out to be Ugly Americans). One positive thing, here: The Chips voices undoubtedly wont seem annoying to anyone when paired with the Canuck goose necked warbler. (WT)

At The Movies (EMI, 1995)

Unlike their previous two movie tribute albums (three if you count "Dr. Dolittle") this is just a compilation of old Liberty stuff. However, it doesn't just draw from the movie album, but also includes tunes from their Beatles, Dolittle, and other LPs. (WT)

Club Chipmunk: The Dance Mixes (Sony Wonder 1996)

Alvin and the Chipmunks, as well as the Chipettes, who guest on several tracks, groove on "Macarena" (English and Spanish versions...check out review of the single), "Love Shack," "Vogue," "Stayin' Alive," "I'm Too Sexy," "Turn The Beat Around," "Play that Funky Music, Chipmunk,"



(they may be white-sounding singers, but don't forget they're members of a marginalized minority!) and even a dance version of "Witch Doctor." "Basically, it's hard to argue with Chipmunk remakes of songs that were initially recorded with just as much (or more) artifice and absurdity and calculation as the 80s-90s Chipmunk records themselves. Unlike the "Macarena" single cover where only two Chips are pictured, all three make the cut for this album's art. But they seem to have either slimmed down or gotten an amazing tailor as their black suits really make them look tall and lean (though they only come up to the leopard stretch pants clad knees of the sexy dancers behind them). (WT)

Chipmunk Adventure Soundtrack (Hip-O 1998)

This soundtrack to their feature length video is a lot like their old, "Around The World" LP thematically. As their adventure has them globe hop they sing in Spanish (that happened a lot in the 90s, including a version of "Macarena!"), and they name check all the places they go (France, Italy, Amsterdam [don't ask!], Mexico and lots more). There's less whimsy here than on their 1960 globehopping adventure, but these original tunes are fairly positive and not particularly offensive, so like most 90s Chips releases they're harmless and fun for the kids. And don't think you'll miss covers here, as they do a grating but fun version of "Wooly Bully." (WT)

The A Files: Alien Songs (Sony Wonder 1998)

I don't know who approved this, but like the last season of Chipmunk cartoons that were all movie parodies this is pretty idiosyncratic. Alvin, Simon and Theodore are dressed as X-Files agents on the cover, and on the CD Alvin and Chipette Brittany are Mulder and Scully (or as they are called, "Moldy" and "Scuzzy") doing not-so-funny shtick around the "X-Files" theme music. The kids tackle (and miss a few tackles) a diverse bushel of sci-fi covers including "Men In Black," "Rocket Man," "The Time Warp" (Theodore does the Columbia solo), "People Are Strange" and "Mr. Spaceman." They may never regain their cred from when they were actually funny, but there's no denying someone pretty hip is working with these kids these days just to get these particular songs in their paws. (WT)

The Chipmunks Greatest Christmas Hits (Capitol, 1999)

This is cooler than the past few Christmas CDs because it actually features all old material from the original single to the "Christmas with the Chipmunks" LPs, plus the "Chipmunks Song" with Canned Heat. It even has the old school original art from the "Christmas With the Chipmunks Vo. 2" cover. (WT)

Greatest Hits: Still Squeaky After All These Years (Capitol 1999)

As far as Chipmunks compilations this (the most recent and easiest to find) is the cream of the crop! All original era material, this has singles and material from the cartoon soundtrack, but also real fan faves like "Japanese Banana" and "I Wish I Could Speak French." Also, this features a booklet with 10 pages of Chipmunks history lavishly illustrated with Chipmunk memorabilia. And unlike the 35th anniversary CD, this acknowledges the true beginnings by featuring the 60s Chips on the cover in front of photos of the animalistic original 'Munks in illustration and puppet form! (WT)

Christmas With The Chipmunks (Laserlight, 2000)

Another cheapo X-Mas repackaging, this 10 track CD is extra Budget-y, and should cost you \$7 or less.

CHIPMUNK GUEST APPEARANCES

David Seville *The Witch Doctor and Friends* (London REU.1219 / Made in New Zealand 1958)

The kids do "Alvin's Harmonica" on their "dad's" record. (WT)

Chubby Checker "The Class" (Parkway, 1959).

Before---just before---he became King Of The Twist, Chubby Checker's first big hit was "The Class," #38 on the Billboard singles charts. The title refers to a rockin' music class where Prof. Checker is teaching his students to sing "Mary Had A Little Lamb." This was really a vehicle to show off Checker's celebrity impersonations (Fats Domino, the Coasters, Elvis Presley, and jazz drummer Cozy Cole, then riding high with "Topsy II"). When he gets around to the Chipmunks, he speeds up his voice for the purpose (assisted by Cameo-Parkway labelmate Bobby Rydell). (JP)

Alan Jackson Honky Tonk Christmas (Arista Records 1993)

This country CD seems pretty "normal," featuring regular songs and a duet with a human (Keith Whitley), as well as such weepers as "Please, Daddy (Don't Get Drunk This Christmas)." Then out of left field comes "Santa's Gonna Come In A Pickup Truck," an unexpected duet with The Chipmunks. Awesome! (WT)

CHIPMUNKS ON COMPILATIONS

Liberty Proudly Presents Stereo... the Visual Sound (Liberty 1959)

Avnet Presents the Sound of Liberty (Avnet/Liberty 1962)

This features the oddball choice, "The Alvin Twist." (WT)

Dumb Ditties (K-Tel, 1977)

Features "Alvin's harmonica," but sadly doesn't feature the boys on the cover, which is an illustration of most of the song titles (a man is on top of spaghetti, Martians are hopping, teddy bears are having a picnic, etc.). (JA)

Christmas Comedy Classics (Priority 1985)

This features both "The Chipmunk Song" and "Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer." (WT)

The Greatest Christmas Novelty CD of All Time (Rhino 1989)

Features "The Chipmunk Song." (WT)

Billboard Greatest Christmas Hits 1955-Present (Rhino Records 1989)

BILLBOARD CHRISTMAS FOUR-PACK! Box set (includes Billboard Greatest Christmas Hits 1955-Present) (Rhino Records 1989)

BILLBOARD CHRISTMAS FIVE-PACK! Box set (includes Billboard Greatest Christmas Hits 1955-Present) (Rhino Records 1989)

The Billboard CD features "The Chipmunk Song" (their Billboard-est hit) and the giant box set features about 2 zillion more tunes. (WT)

A TV Family Christmas (Scotti Bros. 1992)

Features "Twas the Night Before Christmas." (WT)

Rap Rhymes: Mother Goose On The Loose (Epic 1993)

This nursery rhymes done by hip hoppers CD features the rodent rap stylings of A, S & T on Disco/hip hoppified versions of "Old McDonald's Farm" and "This Old Man." Also features Latin rapper Kid Frost doing "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe," Married With Children's David Faustino doing "Mary, Mary Quite Contrary" kiddie tunes from Mellowman Ace and Kid 'N Play, plus a few tracks by people I never heard of. Also, appropriately, you get to learn your ABCs with Stacey Q, and inappropriately Tone Loc does "Old Mother Hubbard." (WT)

Billboard Presents: Family Christmas Classics (Kid Rhino, 1995) This is an awesome collection, with "The Chipmunk Song" of course, but also Vince Guaraldi's "Charlie Brown Christmas" music, Boris Karloff as the Grinch, Burl Ives doing "Holly Jolly Christmas," plus The Monkees, Huckleberry Hound, Judy Garland and tons more. (WT)

Hilarious Hits of the '50s (Cema 1996)

Features "Alvin's Harmonica." (WT)

Billboard Greatest Christmas Hits (1955-Present) (Rhino 1996)

Features "The Chipmunk Song." (WT)

Toon Tunes (Rhino 1997)

Lotsa good cartoon theme songs on this, but "The Alvin Show Theme" stands out as one of the best. (WT)

Christmas Comedy Classics Vol. 2 (Priority 1997)

A curveball here, not the big X-Mas hits, but "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" is featured. (WT)

Yuletide Soiree (Rhino 1998)

Features "The Chipmunk Song" and "Soiree" in the title...what a bargain! (WT)

Santa's Greatest Hits (Hip-O 1999)

Features "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)." (WT)

Greatest Hits of the 50's (Platinum 1999)

Features "The Chipmunk Song." (WT)

DR. DEMENTO's Greatest Xmas Novelty (Rhino 1997)

The Chipmunks entertain the Dementoids and Dementites with fellow mirthmakers Spike Jones, The Singing Dogs, Yogi Yorgesson, Bob & Doug McKenzie, Wild Man Fisher, Kip Addotto, and Cheech & Chong. (JA)

Christmas Comedy Classics (19??)

"Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer" and other dumb ditties are supplemented by the fine Alvin cut, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Mel Blanc, Weird Al and the Jingle Cats make appearances.

CHIPMUNKS EPS

For you kids out there without the archival jones, in the old days in addition to singles and albums, you also had EPs, which were the size of singles but had only four or so songs by the artist (usually from the album of the same name, with the same album art) or had the entire album broken up over several EPs. These were popular in other countries, but here they made them mostly for jukeboxes. Think of them as downloading MP3s of only the songs you like of an album.

Let's All sing with the Chipmunks (Liberty LSX-1007, 1960) Comes with both the animal and cartoon covers. Songs: "The Chipmunk Song," "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," "Alvin's Harmonica," "If You Love Me."

Sing Again with the Chipmunks (Liberty LSX-1008, 1961)

The Chipmunk Songbook (Liberty LSX-1015, 1962) Songs: "Get Along Little Doggies," "Twinkle Twinkle," "Buffalo Gals," "The Alvin twist"

Christmas with the Chipmunks (Liberty LSX-1016, 1962)

CHIPMUNK CARTOONS

The Alvin Show (CBS, 1961-1965, NBC, 1979)

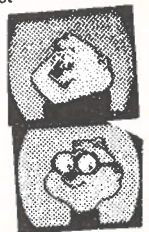
A Chipmunks Christmas special (syndicated, 1981)

Alvin and the Chipmunks (NBC, 1983 - 1988)

The Chipmunks (NBC, 1988-1990)

Chipmunks Go To the Movies (NBC, 1990-1991)

The longevity of the Chipmunks is undoubtedly due in large part to the care taken with the original cartoon. Originally pictured on record sleeves as inhuman little rodents, when a cartoon was conceived the production house exerted great efforts to come up with a suitable design for the kids. By the time they had come up with the round headed, sweater wearing, lovable 'Munks we know today, their rivals the Nutty Squirrels had already beaten them to TV by a year (and failed, see OTHER CRITTERS section). There were high hopes for *The Alvin Show*, and like *The Flintstones* before them and *Simpsons* after them, The Chips were believed to appeal to adults and kids alike, and thus debuted as a primetime show. The cartoon was hilarious, featuring excellent Bagdasarian songs (he also did the voices) and funny, expressive designs that used the cheap animation as a benefit rather than a detriment, by making the herky-jerky movements part of the humor. The Chips traveled the world, exasperated David, and even met a new character, Clyde Crashcup, the wacky inventor. Unfortunately, adults proved too stupid to appreciate the show, and after one season it headed to Saturday morning for several years. It was dropped in 1965, just as their LPs were losing steam saleswise. In 1979 NBC began running reruns of the old Alvin Show and interest perked up, helping to lead the way to the vinyl comeback in 1980. After a sentimental animated special in 1981 (see "A Chipmunk Christmas" review in CHIPMUNKS RECORD section), they came back for real in '83, with a new cartoon series, less stylized, and more "rad" for the 80s. Now the gang was cuter, more "Smurf-ified," and they had female equivalents, a rival rock band, The Chipettes (Britanny, Jeanette and Eleanor), and a matron, Mrs. Miller. Ross Jr. played Alvin, Simon and David Seville and his partner in Chipmunks and love Janice Karman was Theodore and all three Chipettes. Though the



new show was more squarely aimed at kids (the humor was less sophisticated, and there were more didactic lessons learned), it proved to be more durable and merchandisable than the original, lasting in various forms for a staggering 8-plus seasons (unheard of in modern Saturday morning cartoons). As a real guitar slinging rock band they were on tour more often now, and the trendy references included covers of 80s songs, celebrity guests (Mr. T and Dolly Parton met the Chips) and in the last season, movie parodies. Though the show has been off the air for a decade, videos of the cartoons are still being released and are still exceedingly popular with kids. Despite the sublime brilliance of the best Chipmunks recordings, their story is incomplete if one doesn't take into account the power of their animated work. (JA)

CHIPMUNKS VIDEOS

The Alvin Videos compile episodes of the 80s cartoons, and some contain feature length direct-to-video animated movies. They continue to be produced. Here are a number of the titles that have been released:

A Chipmunk Christmas (Produced 1981, released on video 1992?) The animated TV special that accompanied the sappy follow up LP to "Chipmunk Punk."

The Chipmunk Adventure (Lorimar, 1987) A feature! At 87 minutes this is over 3 times as long as 90% of their videos. With Dave out of town the Chips and Chipettes find themselves tricked into smuggling diamonds under the guise of a round the world race.

Rockin' With the Chipmunks (Buena Vista, 1992) This is awesome because it features a real live guest appearance by Michael Jackson, who you know was dying to meet the Chipmunks.

Back to Alvin's Future (Buena Vista, 1992) Clyde Crashcup returns in the Christopher Lloyd role in this time travel adventure.

Alvin's Christmas Carol (Buena Vista, 1992) Alvin is Scrooge, and Seville, Simon and Theodore are the ghosts.

Funny, We Shrunk the Adults (Buena Vista, 1992) Dave and Mrs. Miller are shrunk by Simon's ray, and Alvin "shreds" in a skateboard rally.

It's a Wonderful Life, Dave (Buena Vista, 1992) The boys play Clarence and show Mr. Seville how he helped the world.

Batmunk (Buena vista, 1992) Simon is Batmunk and Alvin is the Jokerster.

Disney's Sing-A-Long Songs, Vol. 12: Alvin & the Chipmunks (Buena Vista, 1993) Sing along with the Chips! Note that Buena Vista, a Disney division, was releasing the Chips vids, thus the corporate cartoon giant got its mitts on one of the best toons ever.

Nightmare on Seville Street (Buena Vista, 1993) I don't really understand how they thought it was kosher to parody an "R" rated movie?

Hair-Raising Chipmunk Tales (Buena Vista, 1993) Scary stuff from the show.

Love Potion #9 (Buena Vista, 1993) Romantic episodes from the TV show.

School's Out for Summer (Buena Vista, 1994) More episodes from the TV show.

The Easter Chipmunk (Buena Vista, 1994) Not the most religious passion play you'll see this Easter.

Ragtime Cowboy Joe (Buena Vista, 1994) A sing-a-long reviving old favorites.

Working on the Railroad (Buena Vista, 1994) A sing-a-long video.

A Chipmunk Celebration (1995) Party with the boys!

Trick or Treason (1995) More scary adventures.

Robomunk (1995) Alvin plays Malone, a tough future cop who becomes a robot.

Kong (1995) Alvin is a crazed director who makes his giant gorilla star unhappy.

Daytona Jones and the Pearl of Wisdom (1995) An episode from the movie parody season of the show.

Star Wreck - Absolutely Final Frontier (1995) More from the movie parody season of the show.

Bigger (1996) A parody of the Tom Hanks movie.

Alvin & The Chipmunks Meet Frankenstein (1999) Alvin visits the Frankenstein house and meets the monster. This is not from the series, but an original animated feature.

Alvin & the Chipmunks Meet the Wolfman (2000) Things get "hairy" when Alvin's scary stories get out of hand in this original feature.

ALVIN BOOKS AND COMICS

4-Color Comics #1042: The Three Chipmunks (Dell, 1959)

Alvin comics #1-#28 (Dell, 1962-1973)

Alvin For President comic (Dell, 1964)

Alvin and His Pals in Merry Christmas comic (Dell, 1964/1966)

Ocean Blue (Whitman, 1966).

The TV Chipmunks by Ross Bagdasarian & Janice Karman (Random House, 1983)

The Chipmunk Story by Ross Bagdasarian & Janice Karman (Random House, 1983)

Alvin Goes Wild by Ross Bagdasarian & Janice Karman (Random House, 1984)

The Chipmunks Cruise by Ross Bagdasarian & Janice Karman (Random House, 1985)

May The Best Chipmunk Win (Random House, 1985)

The Chipmunks' Counting Book (Random House, 1985)

Chipmunks: What Time? (Random House, 1985)

Chipmunks Sing: A Song Coloring Book (Random House, 1985)

A Mother for the Chipmunks by Megan Stine (Random House, 1985)

The Chipmunks and the Little Lost Dog by Laura Stone (Random House, 1985)

Alvin's Big Idea (198?)

Poppin and Rockin with Alvin and the Chipmunks (198?)

Merry Christmas, Mr. Carroll by Eugene Coco (Golden book, 1990)

Alvin and The Chipmunks comic (Harvey, 1992)

Alvin's Daydreams (1995)

The Easter Chipmunk (1995)

Alvin And The Chipmunks: Forty Years In A Nutshell by Ross Bagdasarian Jr. (General Pub, 1998)

CHIPMUNKS WEBSITES

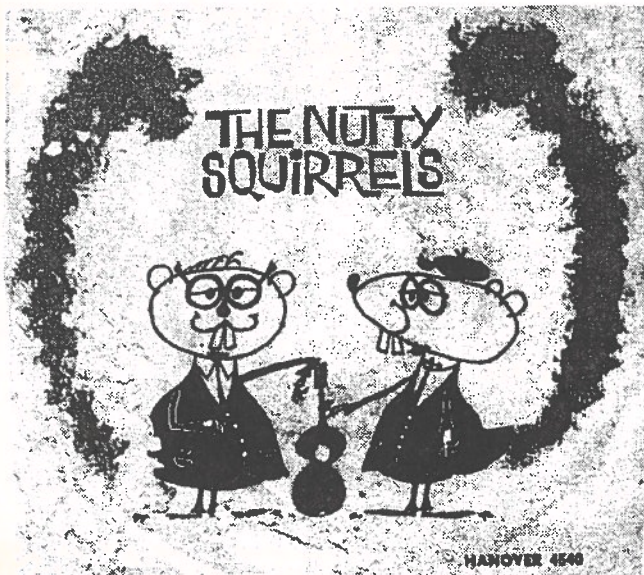
www.chipmunks.com is the official site, where you can buy in print CDs and videos, but it also features a page of 60s comic book adventures of the boys, and visuals that draw on old-school Chips.

<http://members.nbci.com/wrynn/archive.html> - The chipmunks fan fiction archives...no erotic Chipette stuff as far as I've seen...but feel free to delve deeper.

<http://home.att.net/~blue/zubai/chipmunkpage/chipmunks.html> - This is the best one, and they promise (threaten?) a future Nutty Squirrels page!

<http://www.angelfire.com/music3/behind/> - This is an elaborate Chipmunk: Behind The Music parody.





OTHER CRITTERS

Chip 'n' Dale "Ten Little Indians" 5" picture disc (Rainbo, 194?)

Chip 'n' Dale "MR. CHIP'N MR. DALE" b/w "GOOFY'S SONG" 78rpm (Golden Record, 1948?)

Chip 'n' Dale "Chipmunk Fun: Railroadin' Songs" (Disneyland DQ 1230, 1962)

V/A "Merry Christmas Carols" (Disneyland 2914)

V/A "Little Red Caboose and Other Children's Hits" (Disney 1359, 1973)

V/A "Splashdance" (Disney 62520, 1983)

Chip 'n' Dale "Rescue Rangers: the case of the missing egg" (Disneyland/Vista, 1988)

These are certainly not Chipmunks ripoffs, as these Disney characters predate the 'Munks (they debuted in the cartoon "Private Pluto" in 1943, although their revival as The Rescue Rangers was a decade after the Chips "Punk" revival) but there's no doubt their high pitched singing is in the same ballpark. Though they had a few recorded appearances that predate the Chipmunks, their high, speed manipulated voices are used somewhat differently, not as much as an indicator of chaos but rather as a cuteness magnifier. However, their post Alvin LP is pretty wild. With Disney not being the best purveyors of cutting edge Pop, the selections on their "Railroad" record, include faves like "Polly Wolly Doodle," "Daisy Daisy" and the "Chipmunk Train Song," and they are all pretty nutty. Plus add Donald Duck's semi-intelligible rantings and you have an album with some genuinely strange vocals. And if Donald wasn't enough, a decade later they teamed up with Burl Ives for another train album...this time caboose themed! (JA)

The Music of David Seville "The Bird On My Head" b/w "Hey There Moon" (Liberty 55140, 1958)

David Seville "Witch Doctor" b/w "The Bird On My Head" (UA 0063, 1973)

An early example of Bagdasarian's wiggly high-pitched wizardry on the A side. See, Seville's sitting in a vacant lot with a bird sitting on his head and he's singing about how he belongs in someone's arms. The bird sings the last line of each verse, "I belong in a tree" & "I forgot how to fly." They both sing together on the last verse to prove that we aren't separate from nature: we all have our problems. On the flip, David is in someone's arms but the much too bright moon is distracting his lady too much for smooching. He's begging the moon to dim itself. Does the moon speak in a high pitched voice? We don't get to find out. No reply. (RD)

The Astro Mice "No Cheese On The Moon" (Skyway, 1959?) A rare female-managed singing rodent rock act, The Astro Mice were apparently composed of manager Miss L.L. Louise Lewis, Blimp-Whimp and Skip. They recorded a remarkable one-sided single "No Cheese on the Moon," (b/w Louise Lewis' fire safety ditty, "Miss Matches U.S.A.") that combined both the *CRITTER* and *MARTIAN* genres. The group's quite remarkably high-pitched vocals are charming. (KC)

Nutty Squirrels "Uh! Oh!" (Part One/Part Two)(Hanover, 1959).

Fun Rock compilation (Sony, 1991) [Features "Uh Oh"]

Pecker motion picture soundtrack (RCA 1998) [Features "Uh Oh"]

The best-known of the Chipmunk imitators, these one-hit wonders had their moment with the jazzy "Uh! Oh!," with two different takes released as "Part One" and "Part Two." The second part was the hit, and the band swings so hard, this screams for a cover version from an established jazz vocalist. A puppet version of this group appeared on television's American Bandstand, with the two squirrels dressed in berets and suits ala Dizzy Gillespie. Lambert, Hendricks & Ross had nothing on the Nutty Squirrels. (JP)

Nutty Squirrels: "Eager Beaver" b/w "Zowee" (Hanover 4551, 1960)

A supersonic scat follow up to "Uh Oh." Very funny. (EG)

The Nutty Squirrels "Nutty Squirrels" (Hanover HM8014, 1960)

The Nutty Squirrels "Nutty Squirrels" (Umbrella Records, 2001)

The Nutty Squirrels were the only Chipmunk imitators who could genuinely be called originals. Using the sped up voice technology, and admittedly inspired by Bagdasarian's hit records, Jazz genius Don Elliott and TV composer Sascha Burland assembled some of the top Jazzbos, including Cannonball Adderley and Sam Most to record tracks for a pair of Beatnik Squirrels to scat and groove over. The Nutty Squirrels had goatees, berets, and c-o-o-l attitude, and their humor involved very little 'joking' (they were usually too cool to talk sentences, sentences were for squares!) and more genuinely fun, humorous music. Every visual and audio moment with the Nutty two was a gas, including the stereo separation (one Squirrel in each ear) and the modern art inspired visual renderings. This album is grooving. In addition to the singles, tracks include the descriptive, "Nutty," "Uh-Huh," and of course, "Nutcracker." Appropriately, this has become a real fave amongst collectors and fans of funny stuff, and the Nuttys have seen their music surface on all kinds of soundtracks in the past few years, from a cartoon to a John Waters flick! Currently a CD version is available as a bootleg. Unfortunately many of the original masters have been apparently lost (by the late Steve Allen, who worked with the Squirrels) so don't expect a legit reish. (EG)

Nutty Squirrels "Salt Peanuts" b/w "Ding Dong" (Hanover, DP-301, 1960)

Iron Giant soundtrack (Rhino 1999) [Features "Salt Peanuts"]

The picture sleeve for this single has an amazing sculpture of the two hipsters with their empty nutshells and fat gullets. They may not have had all the magic of the 'Munks, but there is no doubt they were w-a-y cooler. (WT)

The Nutty Squirrels "Go Bird Watching" (Columbia CL-1859/CS-8389, 1960)

1960 was a busy year for the Squirrels. In addition to knocking out another LP (this one is just as hep and funny, with beautiful cover art) they also made their TV debut, a year before Alvin did! Because of delays in the production of the Chipmunks cartoon, a rival animation house was able to do a rush job on a Nutty Squirrels cartoon, and delivered a hip, Jazzy, spare product that was one of the more stylistic offerings of the day. Unfortunately they weren't only ahead of the Chipmunks, they were ahead of their time, and most markets deemed it too "out there" and let the syndicated cartoons (100 5 minute toons in all) die. But they were a hit on WGN in Chicago! (EG)

Nutty Squirrels "Please Don't Take Our Tree For Christmas" (Columbia 41818, 1961?)

Enviornentalists? I thought they were Beatniks, not hippies! (EG)

Alvin and the Squirrels "fella in a white coat" (Modern Sound 6911, 1961?)

Modern Sound had balls bigger than chestnuts to be this blatant! (WT)

Woody and The Woodchucks "Sing Your Favorites (Coronet CXS-184, 1963?) Actually, this album is just the Grasshoppers (See *SINGING BUGS* section) doing "Sing Along With The Grasshoppers" LP with "Alvin's Harmonica" subtracted and "Swanee River" and "Red River Valley" added. The absolute absurdity of this is that the Grasshoppers say their names all the time, and neither Archie, Rickey and Dennis are named Woody. On the plus side, the fact that Woody appears to be drawn by a semi-retarded serial killer is kinda amusing. (JA)

The Chippers "The CHIPPERS Sing/Christmas With the Chippers" (Arc, Toronto 1963?)

The blurb is more promising than then music in the grooves: "HEY KIDS! Let us chipmunks in and we'll all have a lot of fun singing the Christmas songs you like best. Sometimes we get all mixed up, but it always comes out alright in the end. We'd like you to join us, too, if you can keep up. So, come on, put this record on your player and we'll stay with you for hours and hours, to help you have a merry, merry Christmas. The Chippers." Well, they *never* really get mixed up, as other than an intro to "Rudolph," this features no shenanigans whatsoever. What makes these Canadian rodents stand out is the extreme vibrato one of them has (The characters are nameless) and the humorless choice of X-mas songs. It's hard to make a comedic version of "Good King Wenceslas." The only great track is "Jingle Bells," which has the singers genuinely using some goofy, fun dynamics that translate well to sped up voices. But overall, this is bland. Even the drawings of the Chippers, though somewhat expressive, are pretty generic. (JA)

Chippy The Chipmunk "Christmas With Chippy The Chipmunk" (Silver Seal UT/S 1006, 1963?)

The only possible justification of this album is that Chippy was in the Chippers and won some kinda lawsuit over the back catalogue...because it's the exact same album with a different title! Actually, this adds "The Chipmunk Song," which is an interesting song to cover because you have to say the names Alvin, Simon and Theodore in the lyrics! The funny thing about cover songs is that legally you are always allowed to do

them, no permission needed (though artists can make the royalty rate prohibitive) but you aren't allowed to do them if you alter the song enough so that it may damage the reputation or success of the original. Thus, legally the only real way to cover "The Chipmunk Song" is to do all the shtick word for word, and the amount of alleged woodland creatures who did just that is staggering. By the way, the cover of this has an amazing picture of Chippy, amazing not because of the generic cartoon, but because it's made of die-cut silver and red foil as thick as a pie tin glued on to the cardboard sleeve. You know, know that I look at him, he may not have been in the Chippers, he doesn't resemble them. In fact, he looks just like...

Woody The Chipmunk and All The Gang "Sing A Song Of Christmas with Woody The Chipmunk And All The Gang" (Baronet 1006, 1963?)

It's the exact same drawing as Chippy, though not foil, but silver snowflakes are embossed on the sleeve. I love the idea that not only can you license music, but artwork too...and the money you save goes into foil! Actually, I don't recognize all these tracks (though some are the same as on both previous records), and some are pretty amusing. Trying to do "White Christmas," "Let it Snow" and "Home For The Holidays" as straight (at times even trying to be sexy) songs in Chip voices is ridiculously weird. It should be noted that the album notes admit that Woody and Chippy may be related, though they are a bit misleading: "The hilarious antics of America's most beloved Chipmunk are here for Christmas. Mischievous Woody and the gang (Chippy and Chuck) are ready to celebrate the holiday...the performances are so skillful and delightful that we wouldn't be surprised if the older members of the family found themselves joining in the fun." Hmm...I guess "fun" is relative, but I think claiming Woody is "America's most beloved chipmunk" may be actionable. (JA)

The Nutty Squirrels "...Sing A HARD DAY'S NIGHT and Other Smashes" (MGM E-4272, 1964)

They shouldn't have been doing rock and roll...they were Beatniks! Jazzbos! But in 1964 I guess even the heppiest submitted. At least they aren't too Beatles obsessed. Nutty versions of "GTO," "Needles and Pins," and "Bread and Butter" make for a flavorful treat, if not one quite up to previous Squirrel standards. (WT)

Allan Sherman "The Laarge Daark Aardvark Song" (from the. album "My Name Is Allan" Warner Brothers W-1604, 1965)

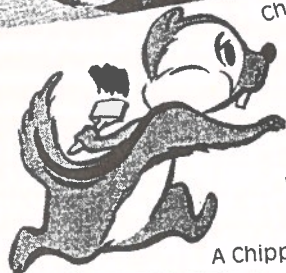
Allan "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah" Sherman sings this song from one of his many albums with the help of The James Joyce Singers. And the funny voiced aardvark joins in with asides ("Delicious," "That's me!") and the lyric, "Boom boom boom boom ba doo boom, yeah yeah yeah!" Allan Sherman sings that no one takes the aardvark seriously and Allan should know as he's "...the friendly neighbourhood giraffe." (RD, JL)

Pinky and Perky "Pinky and Perky's Hit Parade," plus 15 more LPs (1968, Music for Pleasure Ltd, MFP 1282)

Huge in Britain with a TV show on the BBC from 1957-1973, Pinky and Perky are two endearing pig puppets that are, apparently, making a comeback. Their show focussed mostly on music and chat. They've played Vegas and have been on Ed Sullivan. This is but one of their 16 albums. I don't know if they've done the sped up vocals from the beginning of their career but this album is full of it and the occasional Brit baritone from Mr. Morton Frog. They have played alongside The Beatles and here they do a coupla their songs along with "Hello Dolly" which becomes "Hello Pinky." The front cover has Pinky and Perky asking, "Can you tell the difference between these and the original sounds?" Thankfully, yes, and it's charming! (RD, JL)



chip N' Dale



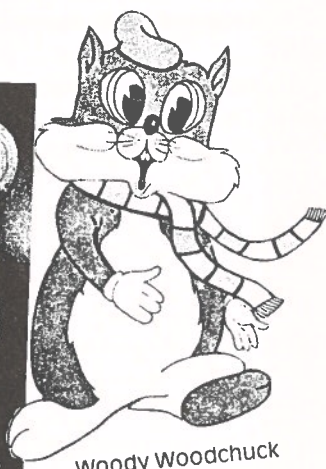
Woody (or Chippy?) Chipmunk



A Chipper



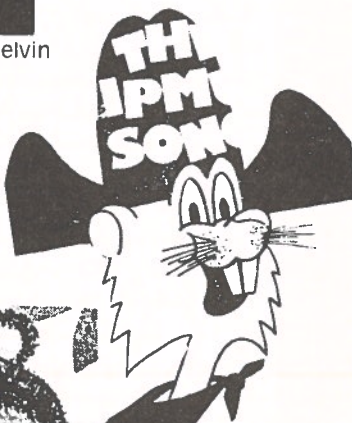
Shirley, Squirrely and Melvin



Woody Woodchuck



A variety of critters from Grasshoppers covers



Little Duck & the Quackers "Out Of Sight" (Paula, 1968)

Chipmunk-style version of the James Brown hit. Said to be Louisiana soul-rockers the Uniques under an assumed name. One member (lead singer and future country star Joe Stampley) is credited as arranger. (JP)

The Marty Gold Children's Chorus "Songs From How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (Pickwick/Camden ACL-9003, 1973)

These semi-sour singing tykes spent side one of their LP butchering Dr. Seuss when Jim Carrey was still in grammar school. They had to fill side two with something, so between songs about Elmer Elf and other such nonsense we hear the human kids sing a disconcerting version of "The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late)." After one verse a frighteningly condescending adult woman interrupts with, "Children...Children! I have a surprise for you! We have a visit from, guess who? *Your little furry friends from the woods!* They would like to celebrate Christmas with you. Let's hear them sing...ready..." We are then treated to perhaps the shrillest "furry friends" ever, yet the poor grasp on the speed manipulation technology is somehow charming. The second verse is just the melody done as, "La la la la." And the "furry friend" who wants a hula hoop sounds as innocent as the baby Jesus, there's no mischief, greed or naughtiness involved here! Actually, the awkward quasi-soulless delivery of the hula hoop line is the same in the kid verse as in the furry verse, which leads me to believe they just used the same Marty Gold kids and sped up their voices, which must have been fun for the kids (and cheap for the producers). (JA)

Shirley & Squirrely "Hey Shirley (This Is Squirrely)" (GRT, 1976)

V/A "All Ears" (Realistic Cat. No. 50-6002) [features "Hey Shirley (This Is Squirrely)"]

Apparently two-thirds of Shirley, Squirrely & Melvin had a prehistory. Before Excelsior Records resurrected them as the successors to the departed Chipmunks, they made an icky-cute country & western novelty single cashing in on the CB radio craze. For a group of rodents (in this case, squirrels), they have a lot of vocal range. While Squirrely gets his mack on with Shirley, there's probably about umpteen different voices breaking in on the line (including a proper British accent and a stuttering Porky Pig knockoff). And you can tell each and every one apart. Can't do that with the Chipmunks (especially after the Chipettes moved in). The other side is the instrumental backing track. Radio Shack carried a comp LP featuring this track to help advertise the various CB radios they sold at the time. (JP)

Charlie The Hamster goes to Sunday School with Floyd Robinson (SINGCORD ZLP 99, 1976)

Charlie The Hamster Sings the Ten Commandments (197?)

Charlie The Hamster Sings Old Favourites (197?)

Charlie The Hamster Teaches Bible Stories (197?)

It seems that Floyd Robinson combined his love of country music, The Chipmunks, and Jesus Christ to make Charlie The Hamster. Charlie is less mischievous than Alvin but still jokes around. Floyd is less angry than David, he patiently chides Charlie. Charlie and Floyd seem fairly likeable. They often sing together, occasionally letting Charlie's lil' cousins Huey and Stanley join in. Here's some banter from the intro to "Think Jesus": "Charlie, what do you like to think of most?" "Candy! Ice cream! Popcorn!" "Let me put it this way, Charlie: WHO do you like to think of most?" "That's easy! Jesus!" Full band (guitar, bass, drums, organ) backs them up on these songs and the two instrumentals feature some good picking and strumming, Jew's harp, and hiccuping. The front cover of the "Sunday School" LP shows Charlie and his lil' cousins in their Sunday best in front of church. One cousin has a slingshot in his

back pocket! The back cover has a photo of a grinning pompadoured Floyd posing with his guitar. This isn't the first or only Charlie The Hamster record. Charlie The Hamster has inspired my band Canned Hamm to debut their new friend Hamster Hamm into their act and in upcoming albums. (RD)

Charlie the Hamster Leads The Choir with Floyd Robinson (Singcord ZLP 978 1975)

This album adds a different wrinkle: a whole choir of hamsters! The front cover drawing shows them in their gowns goofing around yet the record itself is drier than the usual Charlie hijinx. It's pretty straight ahead song introductions with more serious songs like, "His Name Be Glorified And Honoured." But the vocal effects! Wow! It really does sound like a whole choir of Charlies singing together beautifully in a huge wooden church! They sound so holy! (RD)

Woody Woodchuck Sings Bible Stories with Floyd Robinson (Word Wonder World Series K-7381 1977) The move to the Word label means bigger production values and the addition of synthesizer. Here Floyd branches out in the animal world. Woody is like Charlie The Hamster with a head cold. He's got a raspier voice. The Woody and Charlie records are very similar, they both even do "The Sunday School Song." Woody's album opens with him singing, "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck..." He also sings, "...the promised land, the promised land, I am going to the promised land," then exclaims, "See you there!" The front cover shows Woody in overalls reading Bible stories to two bunnies, two birds, a raccoon, an owl, two eyes in the dark peeping out of a log, all around a campfire in the woods. (RD)

The Adventures of Bernie The Billy Goat-Songs For Sunday School - Music and Words by Floyd Robinson (Tempo R-2101 1977)

Finlay the Fish (?)

Things get weirder with Floyd's new animal friend, Bernie the Billy Goat. I mean, a goat isn't exactly a Christian symbol, is it? Bernie's voice is like Charlie and Woody's except with more of a drawl and a strong goat quiver and tremble. He even goes, "Beh-h-h-h-h!", alot. Here's an example: "Bernie, what are you doing?" "Exercising faith!" (singing:) 1, 2, You're doing fine, read the Bible one more time, 3, 4, 5, 6, It'll make you strong, it'll make you quick, 7, 8, 9, 10, Now read it once again, I'm exercising faith in the Lord." And this example: "Bernie, isn't it good just knowing that Jesus is using you?" "Oh-h-h-h, boy-y-y-y-y!" This record is creepy! The cover shows Bernie in overalls in a barnyard with a cow, a duck, a pig, a chicken, a rooster, a horse, and two eyes in the dark peeping out of a barn window. They're all singing Sunday School songs. Don Bolles owns an equally odd Floyd Robinson record that features Finlay The Fish who gurgles when he talks and sings! (RD, JL)

FUNTOWN: Favorite 20 Selections LP (K-tel NC 498 1978)

Petite Sings For You-Pet Care Tips (CM-100 distributed by Clay-Mor, a custom product of Pickwick Canada)

Archie Wood and his Friends Christmas Album (E-500)

As a kid, I used to stare and stare at the "FUNTOWN" album while listening to it repetitively. The circular photos of the puppets would peer out at me- the ventriloquist dummies Archie Wood (wood, get it?), Grandpa Wood, and Tammy True, the cute little dog puppet Petite, and Marvin Mouse. "Who are they?", I'd wonder. "Do they exist beyond this record?" In the early 90's I found out that they did indeed! I was out drinking one night with my friends Julian and Lester and they happened to bring up Funtown. I flipped! "You know of Funtown?!" This caused them to burst out laughing! Julian and Lester are both from Winnipeg, Manitoba, home of K-tel and where Funtown ran for 25 years on

Winnipeg television. This was an institution that was called "Archie Wood and his Friends" on weekdays and "Funtown" on Saturdays. It was hosted by "Uncle Bob" Swarts, who was known around Funtown as "Mayor Bob." The first time that I heard "Hey Jude" I thought that these "Beatles" were ripping off Marvin Mouse's and Tuttle Turtle's "Hey Tuttle" and I didn't think that "Hey Jude" was anywhere near as good! Now as an adult, I realize that Mayor Bob was just improvising and character acting overtop of a track from Marty Gold's "Moog Plays the Beatles" LP. In tribute, my band Canned Hamm took the very same backing track along with Marvin Mouse and Tuttle Turtle's banter to make "Hey, Lil' Hamm." In later years, Mayor Bob had developed an oft rumoured reputation as an alcoholic and one can sure hear it on this album, he stumbles and slurs over stock backing tracks like "Can't Buy Me Love" (where Tammy True tries to woo Mayor Bob by giving him ten bucks and singing this song) and "Put A Little Love In your Heart" (where Grandpa Wood literally misses a cue to a verse and has to catch up, leading me to believe that this whole album was done in one take). But where do the sped up vocals come in? On Petite, the cute little female dog's numbers. This cuddly little bitch's vocals aren't just sped up! They speed up the whole stock pop song! "Paper Tiger," "Walkin' My Cat Named Dog," "The Doggie in the Window," and "Mocking Bird Hill" are all sped up! Possibly even from 33 1/3 to 45 RPM! How brilliantly shoddy! All on an original K-tel album (the only other "original" K-tel album I know of is "Rock Fantasy," an equally amazing album that takes place in, "the land where animals are people" that was most likely made with some Jewel Akens stock backing tracks of "Vegetable Love Song," "Birds and The Bee," etc. at a K-tel staff party). Former Winnipeggers tell me that Uncle Bob often used to yell at kids to get off of his lawn. And, in fact, my ex-girlfriend Kim's mom went on a date or two with Uncle Bob! I would have loved to have seen this show. Michael Dumontier of The famed Royal Art Lodge out of Winnipeg sent me the "Petite Sings..." record. Much earlier Uncle Bob than "Funtown." This cover has a huge circular photo of Petite with a much smaller photo underneath of Uncle Bob waving up to her. The back cover gives us 8 pet care tips (#7. Never pet a strange pet). Although Uncle Bob sounds somewhat more coherent and less slurred than he was later on, this whole album is still shoddy. Shoddily tremendous! Since it's Petite, the whole thing is just sped up pop songs like "These Boots Are Made for Walking" and "Snowbird." In between songs Mayor Bob and the puppets chat with one another. They give us safety tips. Marvin Mouse's safety tip is, "Um, when you're playing outside never, never, never play with sharp sticks, you might stick it in your in your eye." Petite's speaking voice is just falsetto Uncle Bob. Marvin gets angry because he doesn't get to sing any songs. Eventually, even though it's Petite's album, they let him sing. Marvin chooses "Little White Duck" but it's actually just the Burl Ives recording. And regular speed at that!

"Archie Woods and Friends Christmas Album" is a very early album! Petite's songs don't even speed up, it's just Uncle Bob with a falsetto. The organ music is by "Agnes Forsythe" ("their" quotation marks, not mine). Marvin Mouse sings "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." On the cover Uncle Bob and all the puppets are lined up together beside a Christmas tree and in front of a cardboard castle set. You know what I just realized? Archie Wood, Grandpa Wood, and Tammy True are never seen together! I think it's the same puppet! Tammy is just Archie in black pigtails and buckskin (she's supposed to be 'native') and Grandpa is just Archie with white hair and a beard. They even have similar voices! (RD)

Jay Cotton and The Sexmunx "God Save The Queen" (demo, late 70's/early 80's?)

Gary Panter & Jay Cotton "One Hell Sandwich" picture disc LP (Blast First, 1990)

Savage Pencil presented a whole series of albums by artists and cartoonists with lavish 12 page booklets. Picture discs feature beautiful art by the artists! This demo is a pretty good replica of The Chipmunks style, featuring Schystkopf, Carnivore, and Awful of The Sexmunx. Jay as the David character tells the kids at home to get out their safety pins. He tells The Sexmunx to keep trying to sound more punk but they're just not intimidating enough! In the booklet Jay Cotton wrote, "I had the original Chipmunks engineer, Ted Keep, the original session men and the original piano lined up to go next and the money fell through. Heck. Demo of "Anarchy In The U.K." is unusable. It would have been the "B" side." Either way, this is the REAL Chipmunk Punk. (RD)

Shirley, Squirrely and Melvin "Live" (Excelsior XLP-88009, 1981)

Shirley, Squirrely and Melvin "Boulevard" b/w "I Like Reggae Too" (Excelsior 1142, 1981)(Excelsior)

Shirley, Squirrely and Melvin "Christmas With Shirley and Squirrely (and Melvin, Too!)" (Excelsior 1982)

By the end of the 70s the Chipmunks were pretty much washed up, but Excelsior records took a chance on them, and "Chipmunk Punk" was a leftfield smash! Loyalty apparently not being a chipmunk trait, as soon as they hit they immediately signed with the first major that waved enough nuts in their faces, leaving Excelsior out in the cold. Or did they? A cynic might say they label figured, "What the hell, I can speed up tape as well as any Armenian!" An idealist might say they just went out and found an equally talented group of rodents. And so without missing a beat this trio debuted featuring a couple of Blues Brothers type boy-squirrels (Melvin played sax and guitar, Squirrely picked up percussion and laid some guitar licks in as well) and a hot diva frontwoman with a huge tail. This crew had built up a huge following at the grassroots level, and had an indie single under their belts, so the label decided to do something that the Chips had never done...record a live album! Hey, if it worked for the MC5? Anyhoo, this is a real Eddie and the Cruisers/Bar rock type LP (despite a stadium sized crowd roaring during the entire set) and as far as material went, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, The Beatles and "Soul Man" are the flavors of the day. One nice element is that without Bagdasarian Productions involved there's less boundaries, so the absurdity of this group, and their stage banter, is more directed for adults to chuckle at while kids are enjoying the funny voices. Clearly a cover of Janis Joplin's "Mercedes Benz" is completely over the top for a kiddie record, and during "The Gambler" they even do some cigarette inhaling sound effects straight off a Cheech and Chong LP. The single from the album is equally weird; a very adult Jackson Browne song and an original that namechecks Blondie, The Rolling Stones and punk rock. Their follow-up Christmas record was less inspired, with all standards and only one curveball ("Christmas Haunted House"). Because of the odd title of the X-Mas release, cheapo CD reissues credit the album to "Shirley and Squirrely" only, leaving Melvin out in the trees. (JA)

Tom, Dick and Harry w/ Clarence Carter "Too Weak To Fight" from "Between A Rock And A Hard Place" LP (Ichiban, 1990)

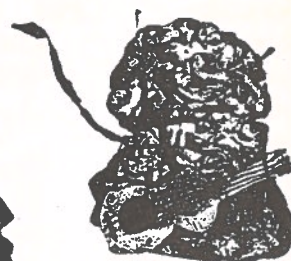
No, not the hit version (and follow up to "Slip Away") from 1968, but a later version recut with sped up voices. The "Strokin'" veteran of southern Soul named his pets Tom, Dick and Harry, and somehow wound up making a better Chipmunks record than the people who had the rights. The three rodents main job is to chant the title at the appropriate moment, but not without a "Fight," with Carter in the David Seville role. The backtalk between verses is a lot funnier than the dumbed-down real Chipmunks records (since 1980), and I can easily see the vocal bits being voiced by a female chorus. (JP)



Flossie
Lead Singer



Stuff
Drums and Synthesizer



Princess Pandora Stardust
Lead Guitar, Vocals

Flossie and the Unicorns S/T (1996, Hanson, HN013)

Quintron/Flossie and the Unicorns "MC Baby Kitty" b/w "Snow Machine" (Bulb, BLB-044, 1996)

V/A "Camp Skingraft 33 Hits! (!) Now Wave Volumes 1-3" compilation (Skin Graft GR50, 1998) [featuring **Flossie and The Unicorns** "Chewing Gum From Outer Space"]

Flossie and The Unicorns "LMNOP" (Skingraft, 1998)

Flossie and the Unicorns "The Animal's Clubhouse" (Rhinstone/Skingraft, 2000)

Miss Pussycat "Part of Two Puppet Shows" (Anal Log, 2000)

Panacea Pussycat puts pizzazz into puppetry! How come no one else makes puppet records anymore? The concept makes sense: recordings of puppets! Quintron, the merrily mad organist, helps out at times. Both he and Miss Pussycat share the same candy and King Vitamin fuelled environment in New Orleans that affects/effects their respective creative outputs. Miss Pussycat has created her own delirious world here. The voices of her puppet/animal band Flossie and the Unicorns don't just speed up-they distort, slow down, go over, under, sideways-along with sounds that disorient. The debut full length record tells the story of how Flossie and The Unicorns become a rock'n'roll band to give children everywhere psychic powers and fresh breath. Christian ventriloquist puppet record collector Don Bolles shows up from L.A. to be their houseguest and to give them Hawkwind's phone number. It has a cake frosting pink coloured cover. But it doesn't taste like frosting. It tastes like cardboard. (RD)

Chris Ligon "Crazy Dazy" (Record Roundup, 2000)

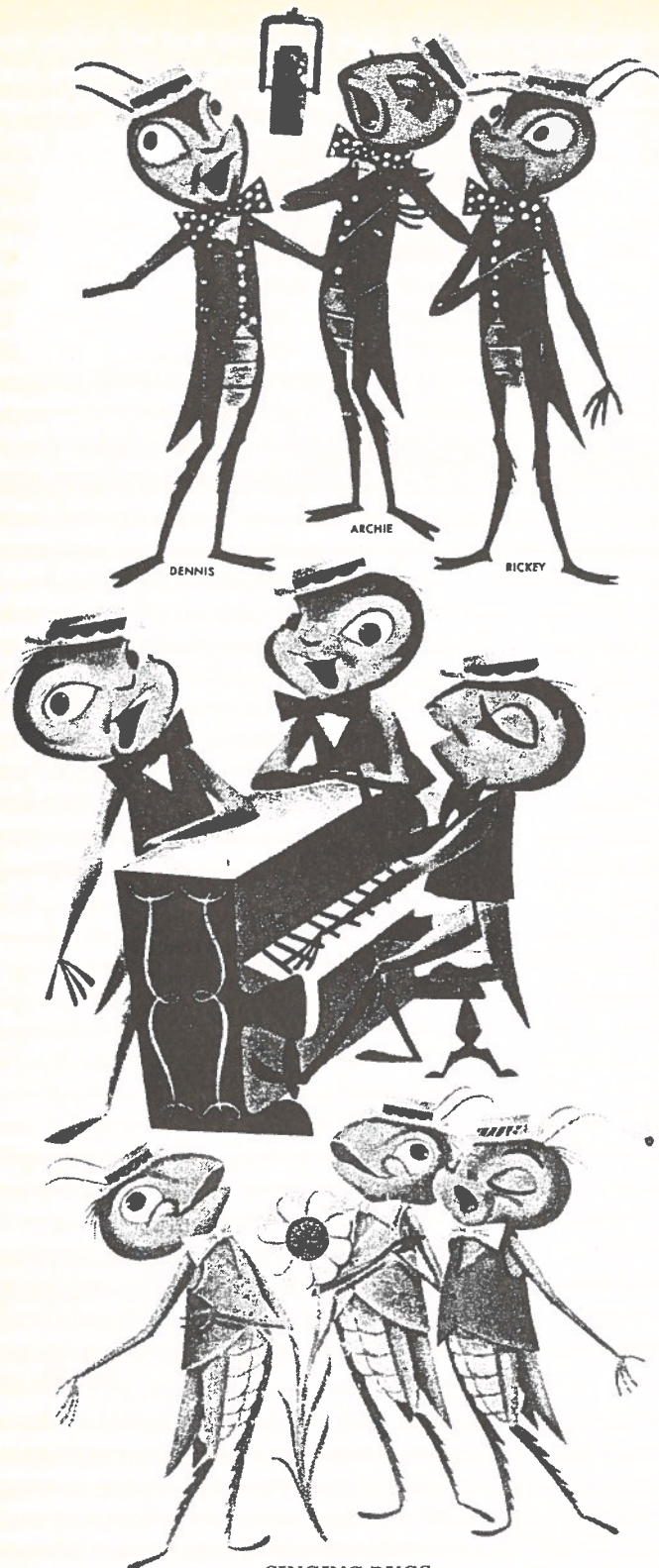
Gwangi the cat sings harmony and indignant lead on the title track. (JA)

Hampton The Hamster "Hamster Dance" (Koch, 2000)

I think there may be a lot of back story to this record, so if I got it wrong, please Internet Goons, forgive me! The "Hamster Dance"/"Hamster Dance" is an amazingly catchy, super annoying ditty that features a scattling creature with a voice that makes Alvin sound like a baritone. I think his rise to fame may involve cute animated dancing internet rodents, and I further think there has been some legal wrangling over who owns the name/etc. (thus the "P" in "Hamster") but Hampton's is the version that gets played on Radio Disney so this is the one I've heard. This record is clinical and soulless, yet somehow hypnotizing. Imagine if The Nutty Squirrels were conceived and executed by John Tesh and you may have an idea what this is all about. (JA)

El Chichicuilotes (2001?)

I've seen CDs by these crudely animated chickens on Spanish language TV and I have no freaking idea what's going on. While they always sing with sped up tape they sometimes sing in high sped up voices and sometimes in (relatively) lower, more manly sped up voices. (JA)



SINGING BUGS

Tony Burrello "The Sound of Worms" (Horrible -100, 1952)

"There's a new sound, the newest sound around, the strangest sound that you have ever heard." Sung with increasingly frenetic calliope and sound effects. The worm makes very happy, squishy, mud wriggling high pitched noises throughout. The Muppets covered this later to lesser effect. (RD)

The Grasshoppers "Sing-A-Long With The Grasshoppers (Twinkle TW 12, also Diplomat 2215, Spin-O-Rama MK 3074, and a number of other labels, first issued ca. 1960?)

Listening to this scratchy kids' LP is a total trip down memory lane for me. I remember my mom brought it home for me in 1963, after having picked it up while shopping at the local Mayfair grocery store. Little did I know that this cheap-o Spin-o-Rama LP was a "rip-off" of the incredibly successful Chipmunks records. The record leads off with the "The Chipmunk Song" ("Christmas, Christmas, Don't be late...") Wait a minute....GRASSHOPPERS singing "The Chipmunk Song"?? Yep. They even do "Alvin's Harmonica" - confusing the issue even more. And instead of the now-familiar Alvin, Theodore and Simon, we get Archie, Ricky and Dennis. The guy taking the David Seville role is "Eddie". The singing and instrumental back is actually pretty darn good, compared to some other "rip-off" Chipmunks products I have. Sounds like they hired some studio musicians, with muted trumpets, drums, piano, bass and guitar. Most other records of the Chipmunk Rip-Off genre that I've heard have just one cheesy organ or something as back up. I actually used to play this record at 16 rpm to hear how it was recorded by the studio singer(s), and credit this LP with my first education in harmony singing. I was in a bunch of bands years later, and was always ready to break into the familiar 3-part arrangement of "Take Me Out To The Ballgame" ala Grasshoppers, but dagnab it, never got the chance. This record is actually in stereo, with neat separation of voices and instruments, but back in those childhood days, I'd never heard stereo and was perfectly happy with my mono kiddie record player. My other big memory of this record is my ultra-conservative Preacher's Wife mom, making sure I couldn't play the one rocked-up gospel version of "When The Saints Go March In", as she dutifully and skillfully "X'd" out the grooves to that one track. Of course, when she wasn't around, I just had to play this forbidden fruit, scratches, needle-jumps and all! God knows what it must have done to that needle, but hey, I was 7 years old. My original copy of this record was lost long ago, but like all good record-collectin' baby boomers, I've since picked up a replacement copy, and although I rarely play it, when I do it instantly transports me back to those simpler, pre-Beatles days. Sweet-Tarts, anyone? (DC)

The Grasshoppers "Sing Along With The Grasshoppers: the Chipmunk Song and 11 other songs" a/k/a "Sing-A-Long With The Grasshoppers" (Parade SP 374, and dozens of other records, 196?)

The Grasshoppers "More Sing-A-Long With The Grasshoppers Vol. 2" (Promenade 2216)

Used record archeology is an inexact science, but it would seem from the sheer volume of Grasshoppers material unearthed that they were the main knockoff group of the Chipmunks. But unlike the Chips, who had a big record company behind them and chart positions, merchandising and crossover (to adults) appeal on their minds, these are kiddie records on cheapo labels directed at parents who'd rather spend the minimum for kids who can't tell the difference. I'm not sure exactly how it worked, but the recordings that the Grasshoppers did were leased, sold, rented to (or stolen by) dozens of labels over the years. On many of these the same drawing, or a variation thereof, of the Grasshoppers appears. OK, as best I can tell these are the basic tracks on their "debut" album: "Alvin's Harmonica," "Big Rock Candy Mountain," "Chipmunk Song," "Counting Song," "Glow Worm," "I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy," "I've Been Working On The Railroad," "Little Tin Soldier And A Little Toy Drum," "On Top Of Old Smokey," "Row Row Row Your Boat" "Take Me Out To The Ballgame," "When The Saints Go Marching In." Volume 2 introduces these songs: "A Boy In Buckskin," "A Hunting We Will Go," "Aloha," "Anchors Aweigh," "Brush Up Your Shakespeare," "Dixie," "Doggie In The Window," "Happy Birthday," "On A Bicycle Built for Two" "Red River Valley," "76 Trombones," and "Swanee

River." So you basically have 24 tracks that subsequently get shuffled around on countless LPs with slight difference in art and title for decades. Often they would even change the group's name (see Woody and the Woodchucks in *CRITTERS* section). But to dismiss these bugs because of their budgetness would be a mistake. These are pretty great records. The music is fun and well arranged, and all the singing and speaking is intelligible (not so with many knockoffs, or even some latter day Chipmunk records). Most importantly, mischievous Dennis, Archie and Rickey and their human friend/manager/dad Eddie Maynard can be really funny. In "A-Hunting We Will Go" Eddie asks what animals they want to hunt. They respond "E-le-phants!" "Hip-po-pot-o-mi!" "Cows?" On their cover of "Alvin's harmonica Dennis explains that he likes his harmonica because he dropped it in his mom's cake batter and it tastes good. They play baseball in the studio while recording. One thing that really differentiates the Hoppers from the Chips is that instead of 50s pop/novelty, their act is more rooted in vaudeville/Minstrel traditions, with old timey songs, Riverboat references, and pictures of them dressed as a Dixieland/barbershop quartet type outfits, with straw hats and bowties. Sometimes they hover around a microphone (or daisy) and on one record they even gather around an upright piano crooning. Musically these records are really a pleasure. Their harmonies are always tight and funny, "A Boy In Buckskin" is a wonderful fun recording, and "Brush Up Your Shakespeare" (a rare example of a hip choice) is a blast. One notable thing is that though Eddie never really loses his temper like Seville, he can at times be far crueller than David would ever be, threatening the boys with death more than once. At one point when they don't sing he tells them a story about a man who was going to step on some grasshoppers because he couldn't hear them singing, with "the bottom of a big, heavy shoe coming nearer...and...nearer" until they fearfully break into song. When Dennis decides to test the waters of transgenderism by wearing a grass skirt to sing "Aloha," Eddie tells him "Boys don't wear grass skirts." When Dennis insists, Eddie comes after him with a lawnmower! Perhaps his brutal discipline can be attributed to his background; when the Hoppers improvise lyrics that don't rhyme he laments, "Why did I ever leave the navy?" Of course, these bugs may deserve tough love, they can be worse behaved than Alvin and the gang ever were, lighting dynamite instead of birthday candles, shooting arrows, threatening Eddie with bayonets when singing "Dixie," and knocking ladies over with their "Bicycle Built for Two." Their biggest Chip ripoff, by the way, isn't their honest covers but their "I've Been Working On The Railroad," in which they use "Choo Choo Choo" to copy the upbeat groove of the Chips' "Old MacDonald Cha Cha Cha." Perhaps the law self-esteem that has them rip off the chipmunks stems from the fact that they usually only appear in the corners of their own album art, with centerstage held by naked chipmunks playing instruments, a farm animal/forest animal band or bear cubs that an artist thought were chipmunks. (JA)

Little Bones "What I Say" b/w "Ya Ya" (Prann, 1963). In a recent interview, Turner claimed that he was the first man to do the speeded-up Chipmunk voice thing when he messed around with a tape machine and gave us Little Bones, the World's Greatest Singing Cricket. Either there's an earlier Little Bones record we're missing, or maybe Ike recorded this in '63 and didn't hear the Chipmunks until '64. (WT)

The Grasshoppers "The Grasshoppers Sing the (picture of a Beatles' wig) Hits" (Diplomat D2337, 1964)

When I said the Grasshoppers only had 24 songs I wasn't counting this record for good reason. I guess Eddie retired because the patriarch is

now referred to as Jerry. And I guess Grasshoppers have a short lifecycle, because three new ones appear here, Henry, Leroy and Herman. Most significantly this differs from the other recordings because instead of a slick studio band this music seems to have been recorded by possibly real kids, certainly not pros. This is a raw rock and roll record with amateurishly stiff drumming. And forget early Grasshoppers comparisons, more importantly this sounds like a garage band compared to the slick Chipmunks Beatles LP. These bugs do skits, giggle and interject mid song, instead of the way the Chips played their LP too straight with minimal Seville. I think it's pretty clear that Seville (and Eddie Maynard of the Grasshoppers) likely didn't *get* 60s rock and thus couldn't really put a genuine rock record out by their pets/kids. This, then, is the first, and possibly the best ever Chipmunk style rock and roll record. There's a budget thing going on here (they don't have the Beatles name anywhere, using a wig as a rebus-style symbol for the band's name), but despite only having three Beatles songs, they accurately Merseybeat up the other public domain stuff ("Good Old Summertime," "In The good old Summertime"), hiply including material the Beatles covered as a Beat band in German clubs. On wax we learn, after we hear some garage-style tuning up, that, "We just came back from Liverpool." Jerry sings an extremely square version of "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean," mocking stiff whiteness like a Def Comedy Jam comic (humor that would be impossible for Eddie Maynard to comprehend) and then the Hoppers update the song. But Jerry keeps begging the younger generation for validation, "That wasn't square, was it? Was it?" The best song on the record (if it's not the raw as salmonella chicken version of "Shortenin' Bread") is an original(?) called "Wearyin' Worryin' Blues." It opens with Jerry playing acoustic guitar, making the Grasshoppers interrupt: "Jerry...Jerry!" "What?" "*DON'T PLAY!*" As he mumbles dissent they skiffle on! The cover art is awesome. Only the bowties are left over from their last incarnation. Other than that it's Beatles wigs, left handed electric sitar, minimal drum kit and a Beatles bass. And a frog (maybe Jerry is a frog?) is conducting with a baton while playing guitar. By the way, this is definitely the same Grasshoppers "franchise" as before, not just a coincidental thing that may have sprung from the Beatles-bug connection, because this is on a label that also licensed old Grasshoppers stuff. (JA, JP)

The Bedbugs "Yeah Yeah" b/w "Lucy Lucy" (Liberty 55679 1964)

This is allegedly a Ross Bagdasarian production. I've heard of cheating on your wife...*but cheating on your adopted bestial kids!?! (WT)*



Ike & Tina Turner "Betcha Can't Kiss Me Just One Time" (Innis, 1967)
Little Bones, the World's Greatest Singing Cricket, comes out of retirement to help Tina and the Ikettes put this one over. One of Ike Turner's finest creations, with fuzz guitar and a taunting chorus ("I betcha can't kiss me just one time, baby...without asking me!"). Reissued on a zillion budget albums. (JP)

The Pixies "The Chipmunk Song" (Diplomat SX 1723, 197?) Actually, this is just the Grasshoppers "Sing Along With The Grasshoppers: The Chipmunks Song" LP with Alvin's Harmonica and "I've Been Working on the Railroad" subtracted. The cover art features kids and animals (though no chipmunks...or grasshoppers or pixies for that matter) running around a Christmas tree. (JA)

The Grasshoppers with the Merry Orchestra "The Chipmunk Song" (Merry, MR 6022, 1980) Same tracks as "Sing Along with the Grasshoppers: The Chipmunks Song" except "Red River Valley" and "Swanee River" replace "Alvin's Harmonica" and "Little Tin Soldier"

The cover art features a big dumb chipmunk head with a cowboy hat and no grasshoppers whatsoever. (JA)

Singing Cockroaches "Ratso" (on 'A Taste Of Punk'n' Flexi LP, Roctober Records 004, 1995)

These three dirty creatures fight with their greaseball manager "Eddie" (could it be an older, surlier Eddie who managed the Grasshoppers?) and reluctantly sing a song about Roctober's own Ratso. (JA)

MARTIANS AND MIDGETS

*For whatever reason, recording engineers over the years have been pretty certain that little people from earth (and Middle Earth ... see **PSYCHECHIPMUNK** section) and men from mars (thought to be small in stature according to Warner Brothers animation and varied gag cartoons) sounded eerily like singing rodents. Here's a few examples....*

The Wizard of Oz soundtrack album of 78rpm records (1939?)

The Wizard of Oz soundtrack (MGM, 1956)

The Wizard of Oz soundtrack 10" (Decca, DL 5152, 1968?)

The Wizard of Oz deluxe soundtrack (Rhino 1998)

The Lollipop Guild, a musical bevy of Munchkins from the land of Oz, in the flick *The Wizard of Oz*, have a suite of memorable songs that may very well be the first major voice-manipulation-for-squeaky-effect moment in Pop Culture (if not, it's certainly been one of the most influential). Who can forget those lovable midgets squawking away! I'm not sure if these were initially released on 78s, though I know some 78s from the film exist. I have heard them on a number of subsequent releases, though. (JA)

"Fun At The Circus" b/w **"A Black Monkey Named Bunky"** (Panda Records, PAN-3002, year 195?)

A recurring theme of children's records is the trip to the circus and this is the best one that I have heard so far. It's done like a news report which opens at the circus parade with our narrator interviewing the circus people. He turns it over "...to that famous midget, Lee Stacey," to show us around the sideshow. Lee has an altered "midget" voice. He interviews a midget who has an unaltered low voice and a giant with an unaltered high voice. They both sing "I've Been Working On The Railroad" together in unaltered regular voices. Lee also meets a talking flea that laughs in a very deep reverb heavy way. Then we get to hear some fireworks. Lee signs off but comes back not much later to show all of us glam kids how Bobo the Clown applies his makeup. Hint: lots of greasepaint. (RD)

Buchanan & Goodman "The Flying Saucer" (Part One/Part Two) (Luniverse, 1956)

Sid Noel and His Outer Spacemen "The Flying Saucer" (Part One/Part Two) (Aladin, 1956)

oss Bagdasarian ("David Seville") wasn't the first person to use speeded-up voices on a record, and neither was Ike Turner (see "Little ones" in **SINGING BUGS** section). We don't know if Buchanan & Goodman came first either, but their Top 10 novelty hit "The Flying Saucer" (with high voiced Martians) definitely preceded either. And like the top 10 records there were cover versions (Noel's for example), which is pretty weird when you consider how this record went. (JP)

Buchanan & Goodman "The Flying Saucer The Second" (1957)

Buchanan & Goodman "Santa and the Satellite Pt. 1" b/w "Santa and the Satellite Pt. 2" (1958)

B&G pioneered the "cut-in record" with their previous hit, and bizarrely it not only did all subsequent ones feature snippets of popular records making funny responses to reporters' questions (Q: Elvis, how are you feeling? A: I'm all shook up...) but also for years most were about flying saucers. All of B&G's, including the former where Elvis saves

Mars and the latter where Santa Claus vs. the Martians (sorta), feature a sped up, electronically delayed Martian voice ending the song. (EG)

Bobby Leonard "Project Venus" (Unity CP-2114, 1957?)

Marty "Marty on Planet Mars" pt. 1 and 2 (Novelty 101, 1956?)

Syd Lawrence and Friends "The Answer To The Flying Saucer - U.F.O. Men From Mars" (Cosmic, 1956)

Project Venus compilation LP (Planet X, 1989?)

Of the many Martian cut-in knock-offs these are notable. "Project Venus" features a sexy girl alien with only a little sped up action on her voice. "Marty..." features the ever popular helium voiced, "Outer Space D.J." Best off, Lawrence's answer record to Buchanan and Goodman's hit features the Martian side of the story. The record opens up with a hyperspeed sped up song playing, which a Martian newscaster cuts off and identifies as part of a "Supersonic broadcast," before announcing their version of the events covered on B&G's hit. These and more (many of which feature a non-Chipmunk variation on the Martian voice; lotsa delay, but no sped up stuff) are available on an excellent compilation named for Leonard's tune. (EG)

Buchanan & Goodman "Flying Saucer The 3rd" b/w "The Cha Cha Lesson" (Comic Records, CR500, 1958)

On this one, Mars has exploded, the Martians have landed on earth. They threaten the President so the President says that if they wanna remain on earth they must go to school! The Martian voiced teacher ("Good morning, class!") asks them various skill testing questions answered in cut up song hits. They graduate and decide to go to the moon. The B is a different kind of lesson than a school lesson with the frustrated instructor teaching old Jewish ladies who'd rather eat danishes. No sped up voices were involved. (RD)

Jesse Lee Turner "The Little Space Girl," (Carlton, 1958).

Turner made it to #20 on Billboard's pop charts in early '59 (it was released in late '58) with this dated novelty, where once again a speeded-up voice is used to signify a space alien. It hasn't aged well at all, but can you imagine having to hear this in regular radio rotation in the late fifties? Once that chorus hooks you, it will not let go: "You've got four arms (the better to hold you), three lips (the better to kiss you), three eyes (all the better to SEE!!!)" There's also a grim, ominous verse that bears repeating here: "What will people think when we go strolling by?/They'd not only laugh at us, they'd lay right down and die/Then they'd put you and me in jail (!!!), there we would be/And the people, they'd come from miles around, just to look at you and me..." However, most performers from the fifties with "Lee" as a middle name have at least one good rockabilly track in them, so forget this outa-space nonsense and dig the B-side, "Shake, Baby, Shake." (JP)

David Seville "Witch Doctor" b/w "Don't Whistle At Me Baby" (Liberty 55132, 1958)

David Seville "Witch Doctor" EP (Liberty LSX-1003, 1958)

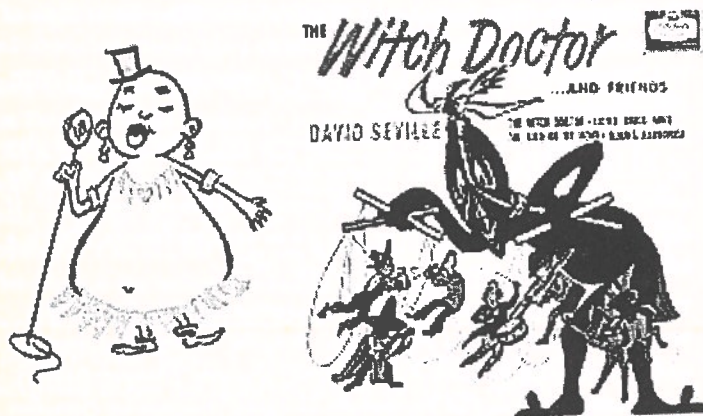
David Seville and his Orchestra "Witch Doctor" EP (London REU.10.007, France, 1958)

David Seville "Witch Doctor" b/w "Swanee River" (Liberty 55272, 1960)

David Seville "Witch Doctor" b/w "The Bird On My Head" (UA 0063, 1973)

Perhaps the most important non-Chipmunk sped up record ever, this established Seville (a/k/a/ Ross Bagdasarian Sr.) as a genius novelty artist. The success of this song, utilizing Chipmunks tape speed technology for the Witch Doctor's voice, made the Chipmunks possible. David, it seems, has an unreceptive object of desire (who has "been

holding love from [him] just like [she] were a miser) so he goes to his friend The Witch Doctor for some love *juju*. I dig that the good Doctor is his friend! The Witch Doctor provides not a love potion, but rather a musical incantation that is sure to have full aphrodisiacal powers! In a super high Alvin voice the Doctor tells David to say this to her: "Ooh Ee Ooh Ah Ah, Ting Tang Walla Walla Bing Bang, Ooh Ee Ooh Ah Ah Ting Tang Walla Walla Bing Bang!" Of course, with Seville's clever musical genius the bouncing, swinging music (starting at full tempo out the gate) is as irresistible as the love chant. Though this did not have the overwhelming appeal of the Chips partly because there is no banter between David and the Doc, there is in fact some great interaction. After the Doctor sings the first chorus and David sings the second, the next few are sung as duets (Bagdasarian doing both voices, of course) and Ross' joyful love for the recording technology is palpable as he blends, and counter balances the "two" singers. The Chipmunks covered this song often. Also notable is that though the high voice clearly indicated this is supposed to be a pygmy Witch Doctor, some overseas pic sleeves (this was an international smash) show a rather tall Witch Doctor. (JA)



The Big Bopper "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor" b/w "Chantilly Lace" (Mercury 71219, 1958)

Joe South "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor" b/w "My Fondest Memory" (NRC 5000, 1958)

40 Funky Hits triple LP compilation (1976?) [features Joe South "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor"]

The Best Of Joe South (Koch 1999) [features "Purple People Eater Meets The Witch Doctor"]

Texas D.J. J.P. Richardson, "The Big Bopper," wrote great tunes like "White Lightnin'" while enjoying a prosperous, if all too brief, recording career of his own. He went on to combine the stars of the two biggest songs of the genre in an original Novelty Rock double sequel, sort of a "Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman" of R'n'R...but, will they rock or will they fight? While its bouncing Pop-Rockabilly rhythms and Richardson's hearty bass bellow joining forces with the hep-talkin' P. P. E. and the

high squawkin' W.D. are positively irresistible, the version by future solo hitmaker and in demand songwriter Joe South wins hands down, with a more flat-out rockin' arrangement and a delivery that's more humorous, and more comfortable with the hipster vernacular. His version appears on the seminal comp, "40 Funky Hits," while Bopper's original graces the B-side of "Chantilly Lace." The Big Bopper's son is currently performing his dad's act as a tribute to the man he never knew. It's highly unlikely that he's doing this song. (JB)

Pasquale and Luigi with Tony "Italian Martians" (Tammy 45-1007, 1959)

V/A "Goomba Party" compilation (Broken English Jive 1907, 1989) [features "Italian Martians"]

This ethnic humor novelty record features a variation on the Buchanan and Goodman sped up voiced Martians; this time aliens come to earth singing Italian trad-pop! Cosmic gondoliers! (JB)

Jimmie Haskell: "Countdown" (Imperial LP-9068, 1959?/luxury limited edition, Germany, 2000/ Zippy CD Company, Taiwan, 2001)

This ultra rare, exotica/electronica buff coveted (thus the reissues) LP features some of the weirdest manipulations imaginable, including the ever-popular Martian voice. "Blast Off", "Asteroid Hop" and "Weightless Blues" are well loved, but "We Get Messages" is the cut for Chipmunks/Dickie Goodman fans. Big Jay McNeely and James Burton appear on the record. (EG)

Joe Meek "I Hear A New World" (Triumph RGX ST9000, 1960, full LP Not released, but scheduled for 1960/RPM Records TRXST 9000, 1991)

Recording innovator/legend Joe Meek indulged himself in his major obsession with outer space on this early concept album (some say the first ever). Four tracks were released on the Triumph Records label as an EP that was recommended for use as a stereo test record. The full album never seemed to have been released until the CD. Joe Meek filled this record with tons of wild and imaginative effects, including the voices of aliens! On the title track these voices are used as an echo of an echo ("I hear a new world...I hear a new world...I hear a new world...calling me...calling me...calling me"). In the liner notes Joe Meek describes the song "Entry of the Globbots" as, "This is one of the tracks where you can almost see the type of people that live on one section of the moon. They are happy, jolly little beings and as they parade before us you can almost see their cheeky blue-coloured faces." Marching drums, guitar, bass, and other percussion come in after a volcanic eruption as they sing, "Doo doo doo doo dooo, doo doo doo doo..." "March of the Dribcots" is bouncier with addition of altered piano as they sing, "dee dooby dum, dee dooby dum dum dum..." This album drips reverb. (RD)

Dickie Goodman "Martian Melody" (Mark-X, 1961)

The flip of "The Touchables" (a regional novelty single based on the TV show The Untouchables) is introduced by a Chipmunk-like voice before the band kicks into a Fats Domino groove (speeded up via tape). Features people laughing as if they're getting away with murder. (JP)

Ran-Dells "The Martian Hop" (Chairman, 1963)

Los Apson "The Martian Hop (some Mexican label, 1963?)

Definitely a classic on par with "Purple People Eater" and "Witch Doctor," as good as, or better than, either. It's Doo Wop at 100 mph with sped up and normal voices on an outer space collision drive. Los Apson, from Mexico, did a great version, too...in Spanish! (JB)

Rod Rogers and His Swinging Strings "The Music Man From Mars" (Film City 1960?)

"I Died Today-The Music Of Rodd Keith" (Tzadik TZ7401)

When Al Valentine sent his cash and lyrics off to be discovered he must have thought he'd have a novelty hit! And Rodd Keith (under the name

35 Rod Rogers) sure made it sound like one! Of course, this being the world

of song-poems, it wasn't. In the song, a Martian sits in with an orchestra (that sounds like a mellotron sounding like an orchestra). The orchestra leader commands him to play it but he only plays three notes! "Are you a first class pest?" he asks. The Martian voice retorts, "I just play the good notes and you can have the rest!" (RD)

Ray Stevens "Bridget The Midget (The Queen Of The Blues)" (Barnaby ZS7 2024, 1970)

I LOVE all of Stevens' comedy records (I'm not sure what to do with the serious stuff) and the way he plays every character and develops a multi-layered, frenetic situation on each song always made me feel his amazing production work represented unheralded, unusual genius that ranked with Meek, Wilson and the like. But upon a recent listening orgy I realized that on a great deal of those masterpieces about Gorillas, A-rabs, GiTarzans and such he actually isn't doing much crazy production at all...he's just performing at some bizarre level! As a noted live artist he likely didn't want to create stuff he couldn't reproduce onstage. So often he's playing 10 characters and working all kinds of different funny musical elements in each song, but he's doing it in such a way that he can do it all by himself, usually opting for a comic falsetto instead of a sped up Chipmunk voice. But on the masterpiece "Bridget" he really does her voice the fabulous 50s way...with Alvin-esque technology! And she/he can really belt it out. My favorite part is the Joplin-esque Bridget doing a call and response with the audience, her with her strange speed voice, them not so strange. Also, to drive it home, Bridget has a super fan/stalker who keeps interrupting ("I dig it, I r-e-a-l-l-y dig it!") in a SLOWED down voice. As funny as any Chipmunk record! (JA)

John Lennon "Meat City" on "Mind Games" (Apple, 1973)

Includes a brief snippet that sounds like a Dickie Goodman flying saucer man, for no apparent reason...I think George Carlin said that if you play it backwards, at slow speed, IT SCREWS UP YOUR NEEDLE! (JB)

Chubukos "Witch Doctor Bump" (Mainstream, 1973)

This basically sounds like "Soul Makossa," Manu Dibango's Afro-funk hit of that year, turned inside out, with a cheesy high-speed voice going "sock it to the east...sock it to the west," to snag grade-schoolers like me. No lie, I had this single when I was in first grade and thought it was the most revolutionary thing I'd ever heard. No relation to David Seville's "Witch Doctor" except in spirit. When the original version of "Makossa" was still an African import, several companies rush-released cover versions (they all failed after Atlantic bought the rights to Dibango's superior original, taking it straight to the US Top 40). Mainstream beat the rush with a weak copy by Afrique, who were actually a bunch of bored New York session musicians. Apparently, with the Chubukos, the label was getting their money's worth by squeezing the trend dry. The flip, "House Of Rising Funk," is actually filler from Afrique's one and only LP, recredited to the Chubukos. "Witch Doctor Bump" includes phony-sounding African chants that wouldn't fool the most naive tourist, although one line bears repeating: "chubuko, chewbacca, chubuko, chewbacca..." This was some four years before *Star Wars*. (JP)

Brownsville Station "Martian Boogie" (Private Stock, 1977)

Cub Koda pays tribute to "Martian Hop," identified by him as one of "The 25 Songs That Saved My Life" (I played nearly all of them when he went in for dialysis, but sadly, Rock 'n' Roll couldn't save his life this time). He also tips the hat to "Boogie Chillun," "Feelin' Good," "Rockin' Chair Daddy" and then some in this hilarious, and plenty rockin' excursion that features a little green man from Mars with a sped up voice and a penchant for "Martian cigarettes." (JB)

Rod Aiu "Me And My Friends" b/w "For You" (RPA 1983) The greatest record ever found by anyone in a Honolulu thrift store, as far as I'm concerned, this record (allegedly taken "from the musical 'It's About

time'") tells the story of Rod's imaginary childhood friends, Mark the Two Digit Midget and Lingerin Myrtle the Three Legged Turtle. This isn't exactly a psychedelic record, but Rod just constantly giggles and laughs throughout as if the munchies and an appreciation of Jerry Garcia are inevitabilities. Of course the Two Digit Midget speaks in a sped up voice. And oh what he says! "Wouldn't it be nice, wouldn't it be nice," (you see the midget, he said most things twice), "If sometime soon, maybe at noon, we could ask the king for some songs to sing?" Rod ends it by whistling while Mark giggles absurdly and says his salutations. Rod, an actor who appeared on Hawaii shot episodes of "Hawaii 5-0" and "Jake and the Fatman," may very well be the Hawaiian Harvey Sid Fisher! (JA)

The Butthole Surfers "U.S.S.A." (from "Locust Abortion Technician" Touch and Go, 1987)

Imagine being abducted by aliens and taken into their giant spacecraft where they interrogate you about the two Cold War super powers. They yell, "U.S.S.A.! U.S.S.R.!" and "U.S.A.! U.S.R." in a repeated barrage. This "song" is from an evil, evil album. Pure evil. And their best. (RD)

broom "Pumpkin Eater" (from The Peter Fonda Tribute 10", Massacre At Central Hi Records, 1992)

At the end of this Barbarella/ "Chewy, Chewy" themed psyche styled cut, a Martian-styled voice says, "That was delicious. I wonder what it was." Then the spaceship flies away... (RD)

PSYCHECHIPMUNK VOCAL SONGS:

I'm not saying Chipmunks records led kids to drugs, but a whole lot of youngsters who were 12 when the Chips broke started using both hallucinogenics and Chipmunk technology to make records by the time they were of Rock age. Here's some samples:

Mothers of Invention "Return of the Son of Monster Magnet" (from "Freak Out," Verve, 1966)

An endless jam with all kinds of crazy voices, include high Chipmunk-esque squeakings. (EG)

The Monocles "The Spider And The Fly" b/w "The Other Side of Happiness" (Chicory 407, 1966)

V/A "Pebbles Vol. 3 - The Acid Gallery" compilation (AIP CD 5020, 1992) [Features "Spider And The Fly"]

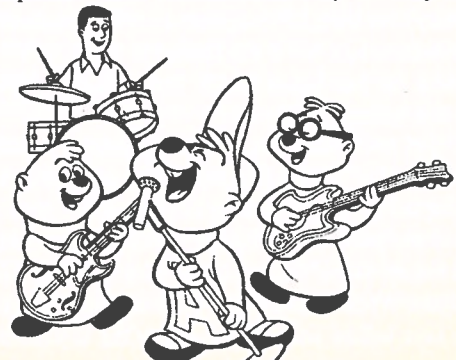
Not the Rolling Stones pseudo-Blues number, this is The Monocles play on the famous scene from the Vincent Price movie "The Fly" where the spider's web caught human/fly hybrid screams, "Help me, help me!" If this is a falsetto and not a sped up tape it's an amazing falsetto. This is a horrifying Primitive garage psyche freakout. (PC)

The Mirage "Ebenezer Beaver" (1967?, recorded for CBS, Unreleased)

V/A "Artefacts From The Psychedelic Dungeon Volume 1" singles box set (Vinyl Museum Products A-Box 1, 1989) [Features "Ebenezer Beaver"]

V/A "Artefacts From The Psychedelic Dungeon" compilation (Israphon ISR 007, 199?) [Features "Ebenezer Beaver"]

The song is about Ebenezer Beaver, but this is definitely a Psyche song before it's a Critter song. You hear Ebenezer in the background chattering in a Chipmunk voice beneath some very Beatlesly British Psyche Pop. (PC)



Jimi Hendrix "EXP" (from "Axis: Bold As Love" MCA 10894, 1967)

The D.J. rattles off his spiel in a Chipmunk voice. (PG)

Pink Floyd "Scream Thy Last Scream, Old Woman With a Casket" (recorded 1967, officially unreleased)

One of two great songs (the other being the remarkable "Vegetable Man") never officially released from the classic line-up's back catalogue. Both songs rate among The Floyd's most ambitious outings, though many consider them to be earmarks of the, "Oh, goodness! Syd's gone and lost it" phase, even though this terrifying, yet hilarious, Pandora's Box of overdubbed sped up voices and one faint normal speed voice are actually the work of Nick Mason. (JB)

The Beach Boys "She's Goin' Bald" (from the album "Smiley Smile", 1967, Brother Records, Brother T-9001)

The Beach Boys are laughing at this poor girl cuz she's losing all of her hair at an alarming rate and she doesn't know what to do! This whole album is head scratchingly terrific! One section of this song has the boys sing, "What a blow" repeatedly speeding up and speeding up more with their natural harmonies getting very unnatural. An unsettling sense of fun. (RD)

Marshmallow Steamshovel "Mr. Mold" b/w "Steamshovel" (Head #1908, 1968)

V/A "Burghers, Vol. 1" compilation (Big Wink BW-1, 1993?) [Features "Steamshovel"]

V/A "30 Seconds Before The Calico Wall" compilation (Arf! Arf! AA-050, 1995) [Features "Steamshovel"]

This Pittsburgh, psyche single's b-side has a squeaky speed manipulated flipside that was the main inspiration a decade later for the brilliant Pennsylvania novelty punk act, The Psychotic Petunias (see OTHER section). (JA)

T. Rex "Pon A Hill" (From the LP "Unicorn," Blue Thumb, 1969)

The elves all have speeded up voices. I can't say I like it, but it's weird and whimsical, almost like a children's novel being read. (DD, PG)

Holy Modal Rounders "The Duji Song" (From the LP "The Moray Eels Eat The Holy Modal Rounders," Elektra 1969)

This is one of those albums that flows continuous -no breaks- and for a brief period Peter Stamfel sings along with sped up voices about how he loves to do his duji, and how he's gonna be a Commie and pick up anybody. "I do, do, do!" He can do this because he's on amphetamines. This album is one fucked-psyche-folk masterpiece! (RD)

David Bowie "Bewlan Brothers" (From "Hunky Dory," RCA, 1971)

Allegedly about Bowie's relationship with Iggy, this song features background singers that sound like they're on helium. (PG, DD)

T. Rex Christmas Fan Club Flexi (1972)

Bolan talks to the elf Nobbly Wobbly who speaks in a sped voice. (PG)

David Bowie "Laughing Gnome" (London, 1973)

Gnomes definitely go into the "Psyche" category and not the "Midgits" category. Here Bowie laughs along with the high voiced gnome in perhaps his most embarrassing moment other than when he wore mime makeup. (PC)

David Bowie "Because You're Young" (From "Scary Monsters," RCA, 1980)

Features both high and low speed shifted voices. (PG)

Carliner Rainbow, etc., etc. various albums (late 80's on)

Had a squeaky, high pitched bull that sang hallucinogenic ergot covered bread lyrics of the 1800's on albums that can be played at any speed, anyways. (RD)



OTHER SPEED MANIPULATION RECORDS

Carlos Casal "Don't Meet Mr. Frankenstein" (195?, label unknown)

V/A "Sin Alley Vol 4" compilation (Sleaze, 198?) [Features "Don't Meet Mr. Frankenstein"]

V/A "Monster Bop" compilation (Buffalo Bop 1993) [Features "Don't Meet Mr. Frankenstein"]

A lively, atmospheric Horror/Novelty Rocker that's unfortunately nearly killed by a cutesy "Purple People Eater" voice assuming the part of the Frankenstein monster. Where's Bobby Pickett when we need him? (JB)

Sheb Wooley "The Purple People Eater" (MGM, 1958)

Towards the end of this song the one eyed one horned flying purple eater says, "I like short shorts." Sheb Wooley also recorded in a drunk voice as Ben Colder. (RD)

The Coasters "Little Egypt" (Atco, 1961) That's right, put Chipmunk style voices on the back end of the song, just as the record is fading out, and catch everybody by surprise! (JP)

Kai Ray "I Want Some of That" b/w "Trashman's Blues" (Brite Star/Shooting Star 2267, 1961)

V/A "Scum Of The Earth" compilation (Sound Stories SS 011, 1998) [Features "I Want Some of That"]

V/A "Born Bad Vol. 5" compilation (199?) [Features "I Want Some of That"]

A pretty fuckin' flipped take on Jungle Exotica in Rock 'n' Roll form with sped up (or helium - induced) voices invoking tribal chants and tropical birds at the same time. No wonder Lux and Ivy of the Cramps rate this among their faves. (JB)

Angelo's Angels "Spring Cleaning" (Ermine, 1963)

Chicago band (with a name that sounds like a Little League team) scored a local hit with this driving Del Shannon-ish rocker. Look out for that Chipmunk voice that, from nowhere, answers the lead singer during the chorus. What happened, the background girls didn't show? (JP)

Napoleon XIV "They're Coming To Take Me Away" (WB, 1966)

To show insanity Jerry Samuels renamed himself Napoleon XIV (and he did spend time in a psychiatric hospital back in the late 1950s). To show insanity his voice got sped up and drenched in reverb as the sirens wailed and wailed. This song made me what I am today, if only just for the repetitive tambourine playing technique. (RD)

French Fries "Small fries" b/w "Danse A La Musique" (Epic, 1968)

Well, well---a Chipmunk ripoff involving none other than...Sly & the Family Stone??? Believe it or leave it. Sly Stone produced and wrote both sides, and if you slow it down to 33 (or 16), that's the old riot-master himself sounding like he's on helium. Most bands in the sixties had their one token "fuck-around" record, and this was Sly's. "Small Fries" is a tale of three little pigs who get drafted. Amazingly, in a year where the war overseas was hard to escape, there are no references to Vietnam, pro or con. There's not even much of a plot---all we know is that "Freddie" avoids Uncle Sam because of his church ties, lazy "Larry" becomes an Army chef, and "Sylvester" decides to become a Navy man (note that the pigs are named after the three African-American males in the original Family Stone lineup---that's undoubtedly the whole band riffing in the background). The flip is a mostly-instrumental version of "Dance To The Music," with wicked fuzz guitar plus the French Fries

doing some background scat-singing. If Epic (or whomever) gets around to compiling a Sly Stone "rarities" compilation, sure hope somebody remembers the French Fries rotting away in the vaults. (JP)

Terry Jacks "She Even Took The Cat" f/w "Concrete Sea" (London Records CL.7965 L.181, 1972)

When The Poppy Family B-side "Where Evil Grows" became a hit, the President of London Records told Terry Jacks to not record successful B-sides but bad ones that couldn't become hits. The A has to be the hit. So, Terry Jacks recorded "Put The Bone In" as the B to the highly successful "Seasons In The Sun." This particular B to "Concrete Sea" is less infamous but just as weird, if not weirder. The fella in this song had his woman leave him and now the mice run free because "...she even took the cat." The harmonics are squiggly. In this obvious Neil Young parody, Terry Jacks has somehow electronically altered his voice to sound all high pitched and warbly. So does the guitar. So do the harmonies. (RD)

Ramones "Pinhead" b/w "Swallow My Pride" (Sire SA 738, 1977)

Ramones "Leave Home (Sire, 1977) [Features "Pinhead"]

Various members of the group can be heard, their voices altered to represent "pinheads," at the fadeout, saying things like, "Pleased to meet ya!" and "So, you wanna be a pinhead? It's so much easier to come up here and pick my nose! HA!" (JB)

Psychotic Petunias "Louie, Louie" b/w "Surfin' Bird" (Mayhem, 1978)

Psychotic Petunias "96 Tears" (Mayhem, 1979 unreleased, acetates only) I decided that singing flowers aren't critters...right? Anyhoo, these Petunias rip through as insane a psychefreakout version of double Louie imaginable. It's not just the trashed up nutjob music (performed and produced by Ohio journeyman drummer, Mike Kolesar, eventually of The Cynics) that fuels the insanity, but the fact that apparently an entire field of helium voxed flowers is wailing the sea shanty with as much gusto as flora can muster. The B-side features J.R. Bird (the singer's real name, but the name conjures a cartoon Surfing beaked one) on leads and you can't really hear the Petunias at all. This record makes no sense, yet it is so perfect in its logic that I consider it one of the best non Chips speed singles ever, and it is a perfect marriage of punk/Nuggets sensibilities. Kolesar recorded a follow up but never released it. (JA)

Barnes & Barnes "Fish Heads" b/w "High School Gym" (Lumina 101/102, 1979)

Bill Mummy of *Lost In Space* is in this band, and the music video has a guest appearance by Dr. Demento. The song was first played on Demento's show in '78, the year before the single. Chorus of song is sped up singing, "Fishheads, fishheads, roly poly fishheads, fishheads, fishheads, eat them up, yum!" It has a very pleasant melody. (RD)

Monty Python "I Like Chinese" (From "The Monty Python Contractual Obligation Album" Arista, 1980)

It still works, put Chipmunk style voices on the back end of the song, just as the record is fading out, and catch everybody by surprise! (JP)

Pac-Man "The Amazing Adventures Of Pac-Man" (Kidstuff, KSS-5023, 1980)

Pac-Man's voice is only slightly sped up but still echo altered as he sings about his slightly crazy lazy day on the song "Slightly Lazy, Crazy Day." On the song, "It's My Job" he feels justified. Very 80's hollow sounding just keyboards production. At least, I think Pac-Man's voice is sped up. Either that or he's Nick Gilder. (RD)

Culturcide "A Day At My Job b/w "Mommy and I Are One" (NufSed, NSFPOS4, 1991, first released 1984)

This single starts out rockin' with band and electronics then becomes a sped up loop that says, "Shit." A fellow talks overtop. Then it turns into the phrase "Mommy And I Are One" looped at regular speed. Turn the

record over. It continues. Then it speeds up with even more sped up talking overtop. Then they fuck around a little bit more. (RD)

Pat Bone "Clinkerated Chimes" (On the LP "Wavy Gravy Vol. 2" compilation, Beware records, 198?)

An amusing, sorta Christmas, Chipmunks/Nutty Squirrels knock off credited to a "Pat Bone" appears on "Wavy Gravy 2," which means it could be by anyone (joke names are often applied in this series). There is a song by the same name on an early Mad magazine LP, but I don't recall it having anything to do with this number. (JB)

The Butthole Surfers "Annoying Song" (from "Independent Worm Saloon," Capitol, 1993)

Not that annoying really. (RD)

Ron of Japan 33RPM single (Hanson, late 90's)

These now-post High School girlyies compressed a helluva lot into this one sided single. Is this all they ever did? Well, if so, it's a great body of work! A sound cacophony party that is very listenable! Completely uninhibited. Plenty experimenting. Little technical virtuosity just good times that begins with the cheapest of funky groove drum machines with heavily distorted tinny sped up voices that "rap" then "scream" and "roar." In between that is a recorder solo. The rest switches gears constantly, whatever comes next is always a surprise each time I listen. (RD)

Lootpack "Whenimondamic" 12" (Stone's Throw, 1999) Features guest appearance by Quasimoto.

Quasimoto "Microphone Mathematics" 12" (Stones Throw, 1999)

Quasimoto "Unseen" (Stones Throw, 2000)

Quasimoto "Unseen" Instrumental version (Stones Throw, 2000)

Quasimoto "Basic Instinct" 12" (Stones Throw, 2001)

Quasimoto "Come On Feet" 12" (Stones Throw, 2000)

Quasimoto "Hittin' Hooks" 7" (Stones Throw, 2000)

DJ Design "Sparkadelia" (Stones Throw, 2001) Features guest appearance by Quasimoto.

Lootpack "The Packumentary" video (Stones Throw 2001)

Possibly the only pitch-shifted rapper (if you don't include vocoder stuff) is Quasimoto, who is really an alter-ego of of Madlib of the West-coast group Lootpack. Quasimoto released several singles and recently released a whole album. As far as I can tell, Quasimoto doesn't have any specific sort of character (like he's not supposed to be some hunchback creature rapping), which means it's really strange hearing regular rap songs (like about police racism in "Low Class Conspiracy") in a funny voice; it's also weird hearing the high voice quote Kool Keith, "I slap my bitch up, like a pimp." I think the shifted voice is supposed to somehow be ill and original, but it doesn't really work for me. I guess some people can get into it. (BA)



DAVID SEVILLE/ROSS BAGDASARIAN DISCOGRAPHY

Ross Bagdasarian, a/k/a David Seville is the superhero of this story; a remarkably talented, funny, creative man who kept plugging along happy to have a hit, but never resting on his laurels. His story and songs have been covered in several places, including Cool and Strange Music magazine (to get you some, go to www.coolandstrange.com) so we won't describe the tracks here, but merely present a discography. Note that his Bagdasarian and Seville personas often

released records in the same year. Also note that though all his songs displayed a warm, original sense of humor, not all are novelty records, proper. Nonetheless, most have great, wacky titles:

V/A **The Broadway Musical KISMET** soundtrack (Mercury EP-1-3160, 1953) (contains a Ross Bagdasarian track)

Ross Bagdasarian "The Bold And The Brave" b/w "See A Teardrop Fall" (Liberty F-55013, 1955)

David Seville "Armen's Theme" b/w "Carousel in Rome" (Liberty 55041, 1955)

David Seville "The Donkey and the School Boy" b/w "The Gift" (Liberty 55055, 1956)

David Seville "Gotta Get To Your House" b/w "Camel Rock" (Liberty 55079, 1957)

David Seville "Pretty Dark Eyes" b/w "Cecelia" (Liberty 55105, 1957)

David Seville **The Music of David Seville LP** (Liberty 3092, 1957)

David Seville "Bagdad Express" b/w "Starlight, Starbright" (Liberty 55113, 1957)

David Seville "Bonjour Tristesse" b/w "Dance from Bonjour Tristesse" (Liberty 55124, 1958)

David Seville "Little Brass Band" b/w "Take Five" (Liberty 55153 1958)

David Seville "The Mountain" b/w "Mr. Grape" (Liberty 55163, 1958)

Ross Bagdasarian "Judy" b/w "Maria From Madrid" (Liberty F-55193, 1958)

Ross Bagdasarian **The Mixed-Up World of Bagdasarian LP** (Liberty 7451 RB-1-2 1958)

Ross Bagdasarian "Lotta Bull" b/w ? (Liberty F-55239, 1960?)

Ross Bagdasarian "Lazy Lovers" b/w "One Finger Waltz" (Liberty F-55275, 1960?)

Ross Bagdasarian "Oh, Judge, Your Honor, Dear Sir, Sweetheart" b/w "Freddy, Freddy" (Liberty 55314, 1961)

Ross Bagdasarian "Armen's Theme" b/w "Russian Roulette" (Liberty F-55462, 1961)

Ross Bagdasarian "Cecilia" b/w "Gotta Get To Your House" (Liberty F-55557, 196?)



Ross Bagdasarian "La Noche" b/w "Naval Maneuver" (Liberty F-55810, 196?)

Ross Bagdasarian "Yallah" b/w "Naval Maneuver" (Liberty F-56043, 196?) [Not Released]

Ross Bagdasarian "When I Look In your Eyes" b/w "Sands Of Time" (Liberty F-56048, 196?) [Maybe Unreleased]

Ross Bagdasarian "I Treasure Thee" b/w "It Will Stand" (Liberty F-56165, 196?) [Maybe Unreleased]

Ross Bagdasarian **A Summer Day's Delight** demonstration record/not for sale (1966)

Ross Bagdasarian "Apple Picker" b/w "Sorry About That, Herb" (Dot 16997, 1967)

Bruce and Dutch "The Song of BRUCE & DUTCH" b/w "I Remember Dillinger" (Liberty 56041, 1968)

Ross Bagdasarian "Jones-Cone-Phone" b/w "Spanish Pizza" (Imperial 66379, 1969)

Ross Bagdasarian "You've Got Me On A Merry-Go-Round" b/w "You Better Open Your Eyes" (Imperial 66414, 1969)

Ross Bagdasarian (Imperial 66445, 1969) [Songtitles unknown - scheduled but not released.]

Rosemary Clooney "Come On-A To My House" b/w "Kentucky Waltz" (Columbia 4-39467, 1951)

Rosemary Clooney "Come On-A My House" 7 CD box set (Bear family, 1997)

Rosemary Clooney "16 Most Requested Songs" (Columbia CK 44403)

Rosemary Clooney "Songs From A Girl Singer - A Musical Autobiography" (CCD, 1999)

K.T. Oslin "Live Close By" (2001)

K.T. Oslin "Come On-A My House" Motiv 8 Club Mix (2001)

Just to establish Bagdasarian's skillz outside of the world of rodent-ry it's notable that "Come On-A My House," a song he co-wrote, while still in the novelty vein, was a legit mainstream hit. "Come On-A My House" was Rosemary Clooney's breakthrough single, and it has become a minor classic that she still keeps in her repertoire (and she can still really sing...her voice is till phenomenal). On a more contemporary note, just this year K.T. Oslin made her return to the Pop Country world with a new album that featured a modern version of the song, a kinda Cher "Believe" deal. The remix version, and the danceable album track, are currently among the hottest DJ dance tracks in the world. And you thought only Grasshoppers covered Ross songs! (JA)

ROSS BAGDASARIAN FILMOGRAPHY

Dave Seville's alter ego had more than Alvin cartoons to his credit, here's some of his filmwork (almost all as a bit actor/extra), including a Hitchcock classic:

The Greatest Show on Earth (1952), **Viva Zapata!** (1952), **Stalag 17** (1953) **Destination Gobi** (1953) **Alaska Seas** (1954) **Rear Window** (1954) **Hot Blood** (1956) **Three Violent People** (1956) **The Proud and Profane** (1956) **The Devil's Hairpin** (1957) **The Deep** (1957)

Endnote: Here's a review of an amusing unlicensed Chip joint that helped pave the way for their 1980 comeback:

Alvin and The Chipmunks - "Live at Budokan" radio ad, Dallas, Texas ca. '79-'80

Yes, there was unauthorized Chipmunk product (or in this case, just an ad for a product that didn't exist!) and this surfaced shortly before (and likely inspired) The Chipmunks' official comeback LP, "Chipmunk Punk" (a misnomer for sure, I had dreamed of a real Punk/New Wave collection called "White Munks on Dope" at the time). This parody featured snippets of Alvin and the boys doing "Surrender," "Ain't That a Shame," "I Want You To Want Me," and even "Like a Rolling Stone," a nod to Dylan's just released Budokan LP. A similar "ad" had them doing "Heartache Tonight" and "My Sharona," yet another taste of things to come. To top it off, "Dave" could be heard saying, "Alvin! What's in that pipe, Alvin?!" "CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR CHIPMUNKS, DAVE!!!!" Many such joke ads appeared in different markets (a Philly DJ is credited with starting the trend) before the inevitable flood of "Cease and Desist" orders filled their mailboxes...and Chipmunks Inc. took the joke and ran with it! (JB)

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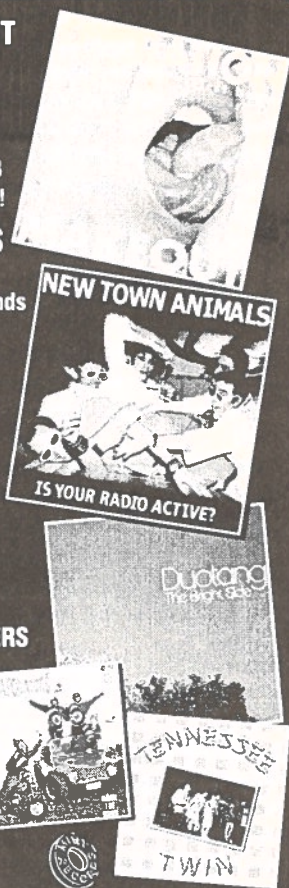
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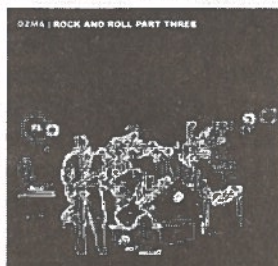
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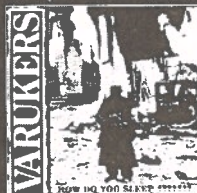


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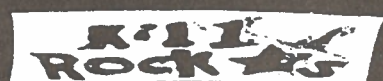
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JAMES PORTER (ROCTOBER ACE REPORTER)

1. **LUCKY PETERSON** "1-2-3-4" b/w "Good Old Candy" (Yambo, re-released on Today)

Peterson is popular on the blues circuit now, but in 1971 he was the blues' answer to the Jackson Five, appearing on *SESAME STREET* and other TV programs as the five-year-old organ-playing blues sensation. "1-2-3-4" is "Please, Please, Please" with new "lyrics" ("1-2-3-4/1-2-3-4/Lucille/I love you dear"). "Good Old Candy" is ostensibly about what the title implies, although Lucky's preschool voice is so garbled, who can tell? He gets in some great showoff organ licks, and on "Candy" he screams a lot. If no one will reissue this, wonder if he'll sing it in his current live set?

2. **PONDEROSA TWINS PLUS ONE** "2+2+1=Ponderosa Twins Plus One" LP (Horoscope)

They sang horribly off-key, and one of the two lead singers' voices is squeakier than Lucky Peterson's, but when you're a group of 15 imitators from Cleveland in 1971 with the built-in gimmick of two sets of twins, who cares? All is forgiven when the sugary harpsichord kicks in on "Bound." God bless the Ponderosa Twins Plus One.

3. **FOSTER SYLVERS** "Misdemeanor" (MGM)

Sylvers was only eleven when he recorded this in 1973, but the lyrics (written by older sibling Leon Sylvers III) are amazingly sophisticated. I love the smartass commentary from the two background singers, particularly when one of them compares young Foster's heartbreak to "(running) a red light and (finding) yourself run over." When he became a little older, he joined his older brothers and sisters in the Sylvers (that's Foster doing the high vocals on "Boogie Fever," their 1975 disco hit).

4. **ROCKY FELLERS** "Killer Joe" (Scepter)

You either love or hate this early-sixties one-shot from a group of Asian kids---there is no in-between. If the helium vocals get to you, the cute name certainly does you in. I'm not throwing my copy away anytime soon, for damn sure...

5. **SCHOOLBOYS** "Please Say You Want Me" (OKeh)

Or "Shirley." Or "I'm Old Enough." The Schoolboys, the only doo-wop group I can think of composed entirely of pre-pubescent, were THAT good.

6. **RED SAUNDERS ORCHESTRA** "Hambone" (OKeh)

No, this wasn't the world's first kiddie band. The story here is with the featured guests, the Hambone Kids (featuring a then-unknown Dee Clark, circa early fifties), working up a knee-slapping fervor on this Bo Diddley precursor (one of many).

7. **AKIM** "Santa Claus Is A Black Man" (Simtone).

Title sez it all. From 1973.

8. **FIVE STAIRSTEPS & CUBIE** "New Dance Craze" (Buddah).

If you've ever seen any pics of the Chicago family group the Five Stairsteps from the sixties, you'll note that there's a toddler (Cubie) who looks like he just learned to walk. He can barely talk on "New Dance Craze," where they just simply overdubbed his voice over a completed Stairsteps track. Cubie's attempts at vocalizing are unintelligible, but as with Lucky Peterson, he could scream James Brown clean out of the building. From 1968.

9. **LITTLE GARY FERGUSON** "A Mothers Love" (Mother's)

Supposedly this was Dallas, TX's pint-sized James Brown. Another story has him coming to Los Angeles to play a gig with Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention. I don't quite believe that one [Editor's Note: I'm almost positive I've seen a poster for the Ferguson/Zappa show], but as Gary himself sings in the song: "Next to your kiss and your hug, ain't nothing better than a Mothers love (lookahere!)." 10. **KATIE SWEET** "I Love To Rock" (Deck).

Not bad rockabilly for a three-year-old.

KELLY KUVO (GODDESS)

1. "Black Fairy Meets Johnny," on the album "**BLACK FAIRY**," a spoken word/musical recording written by Useni Eugene Perkins c/o The Boys Foundation Family Center

2. "Thunder Cloud" by **THE HARMONICA KIDS WITH DAD** on the LP "A Delightful Musical Experience With The Harmonica Kids"

3. Any song on the album "Big Hits For Little People" by **THE RICHARD WOLFE CHILDRENS CHORUS**

4. "Girl All Alone," by the young **DOLLY PARTON**

5. (Hipster cop out #5 choice) **THE CLEAN** "The Ginger Ale Song" (sung by a little kid)

5. (The REAL DEAL #5!) "A Girl Who's Always Chawin' Gum", by ????? Roctober readers, maybe you can help me. 10 years ago I had made a tape of a record at the Chicago Public Library called The History of Country Music Vol. I & II. On it was a song sung by a kid about a girl who is "always chawin' gum". Anyway, my cassette was stolen a few months ago and I can't remember the title! The Library no longer has the record, and I can't find the record anywhere on the internet to try to track down.... anyway it's a great song written and sung by a kid as his dad plays the guitar along with it. His dad was the host of the show. Uuuugh! I can't remember the friggin' name.

[Editor's Plea: Please Roctober Readers... Fill In This Blank!]

JOHN BATTLES (Gentleman and Scholar)

FAVE KID RECORDS

1. **COLLINS KIDS** "Whistle Bait"

Though this list is in no specific order, "Whistle Bait" is the ONE for ME ! I love Laurie Collins (Hell, I even kissed her once!), but little brother Larry, barely old enough for Little League (were he not so talented), screams hellfire and outright LUST over some unfashionably voluptuous (by today's depressing standards) vixen, to his own frenzied guitar accompaniment, & sounds totally convincing.

2. **BRENDA LEE** "Bigelow 6-210" b/w "Jambalaya"

Brenda Lee comin' on STRONG with a hot Rockabilly two-sider, supposedly recorded when she was only 9, a dubious claim at best, as the young Miss Lee goes off like a Ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-CHERRY BOMB!!!!

3. **HALF-PINT AND THE FIFTHS** "Orphan Boy"

VERY youthful Chicago Southside Sixties Punk band, led by the blonde Latino "Half Pint," tell the tale of REAL urban misery, set to a monster guitar riff that'd have done the late Brian Pendleton proud. The guitarist's nephew currently plays bass in latter day Southside Garage band, The Crookshanks.

4. **THE MOSS BROS.** "Hot Water"

The debut CD by this preteen brother act (who play all their own instruments) has lots of great songs like "Football All The Way" and the sorta Garage Punk "Guitar and Drums", but this clever Blooze about what unspeakable fate awaits should Mom find out the dishes haven't been done (hence the title) would be a hit if this "Youth Trend" extended itself to the truly young., and not so trendy.

5. **CUB KODA WITH ROCK N' ROLL MABEL AND THE UNKNOWN ANIMALS** "Ten Little Women"

The Cubmaster becomes the headmaster, directing a kids' choir on this raw Rockabilly/R&B killer. Features a call & response chorus sung not quite in unison by a dozen or so gradeschoolers totally wired on soda pop. You can readily guess that these kids were as cute as they WANTED to be, but they're rockin' just as hard as the man who set them on the righteous path, especially when they all call out, "GO DADDY-O!!!!" Not surprisingly, the same super-shorties also sang with Cub on a great version of the Collins Kids' classic, "Beetle Bug Bop", but this is probably the better of the two. The kid in me that grooved to "Smokin' in The Boys' Room" in Catholic school knows that the kid in Koda will be with us always.

6. **TROY HESS** "Please Don't Go Topless, Mother"

Unintentionally (?) hilarious C & W weeper about a boy begging his widowed Mom to quit working as a topless go-go dancer. Chockfull of forced double entendres that would have died on the vine if the kid could have actually carried a tune.

7. **MATTHEW MESSBARGER AND THE SPOTLIGHTS** "Throw Me In The Garbage Can"

In the late 80s, at age 9, Matthew was cranking out terrific songs like "I Just Found Out My Pet Turtle is a Mobster," "The Truly Tackies" and "Yuppieville" ("Oh, It's a place that's worse than Hell, it's a place called Yuppieville..."). By age ten, he'd appeared live on "The Loop" (Chicago Rock radio for people who never got over the 70s and/or High School) several times, once with his own group, all school friends, but the deejays talked aloud over the whole performance. "Garbagecan," though never released, was a big hit with listeners, and with the 19,000 Loop fans who saw him sing it live at Alpine Valley. Matt's songs had clever, hilarious lyrics, with surprisingly accurate meter, melody & rhyme, but after getting that elusive shot at local fame, he apparently dropped out of music. Pity.

8. **SUMNER AND CYDNE ERICKSON** "Palace of The Self"

Roky Erickson's daughter, Cydne (Proun."Sidney"), herself a prodigious singer with an impressive, semi-Operatic range, made her recording debut with her Uncle Sumner (lead tuba man for the Pittsburgh Symphony) a few years ago, while still in her pre-teens. It has yet to be released, but will appear on Sumner's debut solo CD. Young Cydne definitely colored in this Psychedelic freakout with her RED KRAYOLA. Consisting of tones instead of words, Cydne's improvised vocals come from another place entirely (as does the musical backing). Her Dad should be very proud.

9. **THE STUPID BABIES** "Baby Sitters"

I used to piss myself laughing over this home recorded oddity. All it was, was a guy playing what sounded like a modified ukelele behind a two or three year old English child singing "BABY SITTERS

BABY SITTERS, BABY SITTERS, BABY SITTERS...ME - HATE - BABY - SITTERS !!!!!" Oh, yeah, there's a gazoo solo, and it's all over in about 30 seconds. They meant it, maan.

10. **THE FUKNOTZ** "Let's Play ScratchnSniff With Grandpa's Butt"

Fuknotz were a later incarnation of Detroit's Snake-Out. Recorded live at the day school one of the band members worked at, you could call it the product of a sick mind, but don't you wish YOU had a teacher cool enough to record you and your friends singing about this new game, described in the title? The kids sound like they're having a great time.! It's like the time my little cousin and I were watching "Pee Wee's Playhouse" and Pee Wee said "Milk, milk, lemonade, round the corner, fudge is made!" My cousin knew the rest of the words. Thank God!

SPECIAL MENTION: After struggling to keep this list down to ten, I remembered I'd forgotten **LAS DILLYS SISTERS**, the Los Angelitas whose take on the Standells' Punk anthem, "Sometimes Good Guys Don't Wear White" is so adorable, I have to sweep those red cartoon Valentine hearts off my floor every time I hear it. They beat The Clash's own barn-stormin' remake of "Career Opportunities" to the punch by nearly 15 years.



PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE (PSYCHEDELIAC)
TOP 5 PSYCH-SONGS WITH CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

1. **WIZZARD** "I Wish It Could Be X-Mas Everyday"
2. **KEITH WEST** "Excerpt From A Teenage Opera"
3. **SPEAKERS** "Si La Guerra Es Un Buen Negocio, Invierte Tus Hijos"
4. **ENO** "Put A Straw Under Baby"
5. **CLOVER** "Ice Cream Man"

BONUS: TOP 6 HANNA BARBERA RECORDS for the kids!

1. **HAIR BEAR BUNCH** - S/T
2. **SECRET SQUIRREL** "The Alphabet Song"
3. **THE BANANA SPLITS** - "Were the..."
4. **THE FUNKY PHANTOM** - S/T
5. **MAGILLA GORILLA** "Alice In Wonderland"
6. **HUCKLEBERRY HOUND** "...with stories & songs of Uncle Remus"

BRIAN MIER (ROCTOBER BRAZILLIAN LIASAN)

1. RAUL SEIXAS AND BALAO MAGICO "Zupt Zapt Zoom"

Brazilian Rock legend Raul Seixas teams up with children's supergroup A Turma do Balao Magico, (see separate article) to do the program's theme song, which is about getting ready for an interstellar journey, but not being able to leave yet because you have to give your ticket to the conductor, have your passport stamped, etc. A translation of the chorus is "Zupity Zapity Zoom, you're not going anywhere." A smash hit in Brazil, enjoyed by adults and children alike. One of Raul's last great songs.

2. MC JOHNATAN "Eu sou Johnatan"

7 year old MC Johnatan is currently one of the biggest stars in the Rio de Janeiro funk movement. Funk in Rio means early 80s style house beats with simple raps, often focusing around the word *Popozudo*, which means "big butt." Each hit record starts a new dance craze. MC Jonathan raps about how, during the week he goes to school, and on weekends he flies kites and plays soccer and how, though he is from "the new generation" when he gets older he'll get his own "*Filet do Popozao*," or Big Butt Filet.

3. UMA CASA "Vinicius de Moraes and Toquinho."

This 60s MPB song by Bossa Nova legend Vinicius do Moraes has a chorus of children singing on it.

4. A TURMA DO BALAO MAGICO "Superfantastico"

This Turma do Balao Magico record, which went gold in Brazil, was written by MPB (Brazilian Pop) star Djavan, who sings it with them.

5. MENINOS DO PELÔ "To Meninho do Pelô"

This group of Black children from Salvador, Bahia scored a hit in 1993 with this *Axé* number about life in the 400 year old neighborhood of Pelorinho. Much better than the overrated crap put out by adult *Axé* pop musicians like Daniela Mercury and her clones. The lead singer has a cute speech impediment.

6. ANGELICA "Vou de Taxi"

When the Xuxa show (the massively popular Children's TV show) moved to the powerful Globo network, the Manchete network replaced her with 12 year old Angelica. The logic was, "why use a skimpily dressed, blonde adult actress who acts like a child when we can use a skimpily dressed, blonde child?" "*Vou de Taxi*" (I'll take a cab) was her first hit record. She is the second biggest children's variety show host of all times in Brazil, and an even worse singer than Xuxa.

7. TREN DA ALLEGRIA "Piui Abaxaxi"

Tren da Alegria was a bland copy of A Turma do Balao Magico, who sang a lot of songs by the pop song writing team of Massasas and Sullivan, who also wrote most of Xuxa's hits. This song went gold in Brazil and was their biggest hit. *Piui Abacaxi* means "Peewee pineapple" in English.

8. KLEBER & KELVIN "Ama quem te ama"

Brazilian "*Sertanejo*," or country music, is famous for its singing duos. In the early 90s some record executive decided it would be cute to have a duo of children, with bullet haircuts and cowboy boots, sing Brazilian versions of Americana country songs. Their first single was a huge hit but as soon as it took off, Chitaozinho and Chororo, the most popular and annoying duo of all times, recorded a song with their children, Sandy and Junior, and blew Kleber and Kelvin out of the big time. Kleber and Kelvin were better vocalists, but they didn't have the clout that Sandy and Junior did.

9. SANDY AND JUNIOR "inesquecivel"

Sandy and Junior are the biggest selling child act of all times in Brazil. It's watered down pop, but as she's grown pretty Sandy, who is now 18, has developed a great voice and is rapidly turning into the Latin American Britney Spears. She's already recorded with Enrique Iglesias and had hit records in Spanish. Now they are talking about recording in English as well. Junior has turned into an arrogant, talentless hanger on, but my Brazilian in-laws think I say this because I am in love with Sandy and "jealous" of Junior.

9. BANDA CHOCALATE "Superhomen" (Superman)

Before REM, there was this single by a Brazilian family act who featured their young son on lead vocals.

11. MOLEQUITA

"Mini" version of "*Eu o Tchan*" the Bahian samba pop hit machine.

2 ACTS WHO DIDN'T MAKE THE LIST FOR TECH REASONS:

BOZO - Yes, there was a Brazilian Bozo show in the 80s, and unlike the Chicago Bozo, this clown had some minor hit pop songs.

BABY CONSUELO - Ex-member of the post Mutantes rock band "Os Novos Biahanos," drugged out looking Baby Consuelo used her own babies as props on all of her many album covers. It seems like she had more babies just because of the new albums. There she is, breast feeding on one album cover, surrounded by toddlers on another, Scary.



Junior and his Soulettes (art: K. Thor Jensen)

K. THOR JENSEN (COMIX ARTISTE)

1. JUNIOR AND HIS SOULETTES "Thing, Do The Creep":

The best kid-funk-soul band in history. Like the Shaggs with more groove in the ass and better song titles.

2. THE COLLINS KIDS "I'm In My Teens"

Larry on the double-neck Mosrite and Lorrie belting it out. Rockabilly awesome.

3. JUVENILE DELINQUINTZ "Juvenile Delinquentz"

From "Terminator X & The Valley Of The Jeep Beets," the Public Enemy DJ's album. Utterly foul-mouthed, school-hating and as far as I know their only release.

4. X-RAY SPEX "Oh, Bondage, Up Yours"

Polly Styrene was still in high school, right? (Editor's note: she had braces...she qualifies!)

5. STINKY PUFFS "I Am Gross - No You're Not!"

More for the pedigree than the actual recordage, with Jad Fair's ten-year-old son handling voice and guitar, although I saw them live in the hazy mid-Nineties and they were a lot of fun.

6. OLD SKULL "Get Outta School"

The late 1980s were a very heady time, and as I came into puberty and chanced upon these three grotty nine-year-old skater kids playing Wisconsin hardcore late at night on MTV it blew the doors wide open. In retrospect, they kinda sucked.

7. SMOG "No Dancing"

Would you let Bill Callahan, the most depressed man in rock, watch your kids? Somebody did, as on his "Knock Knock" record there's a few songs with a ramshackle children's chorus. This is the best one.

8. JORDY "Dur Dur D'etre Bebe"

French rapping baby turns the novelty-song world on its ear. His album was called "Pochette Surprise" (Surprise Package). Somewhere, Chuck D is crying.

9. ROLLING STONES "You Can't Always Get What You Want"

Somehow kids just lend their voices well to enormous songs like this one. I really do love this song, no matter how many car commercials I see it in.

10. AARON CARTER "Aaron's Party"

When my girlfriend and I go driving sometimes we listen to Radio Disney and it's always amazing how listenable the songs of this Backstreet Boy's kid sibling are - stupid, raucous (in a very polished techno dance kid-friendly way) and very, very preteen.

ART FEIN (ALL STAR POKER PARTY PERSON)

1. YVON LEBLANC "Mama Rosin"

I found this Cajun gem on the backside of an Arhoolie album of Nathan Abshire, who did "Pinegrove Blues." It is apparently a young girl, singing about her mama (pronounced Roseanne), in strange Cajun French backed by Caribbean rhythms. When one of the guys who now owns Rhino Records came to my apartment 20 years ago he heard this playing and said, "What is that? Japanese?"

2. AUGIE RIOS "Mamacita, Donde Esta Santa Claus"

Not really rockin' but fond memories of 1958, hearing this on Jim Lounsberry's Chicago Bandstand.

3. BRENDA LEE "Jambalaya"

She's singlehandedly inventing rock-a-filly here. Her hiccups and delivery are standards which were never topped, the enthusiasm and excess of youth. Recorded mid-1956 and never charted. Also, I saw her sing it in June, 1957 at the Howard Miller show at the Chicago Opera House. All her 1956-1957 stuff is dynamite -- which is why they called her "Little Miss Dynamite."

4. JERRY NAILL "Barbecue Rock"

This is an awful record from an unknown movie (*Tomboy & The Champ*) but is IS pre-teen rockabilly, & "you know that can't be bad."

5. JIMMY BOYD "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus"

This 1952 Jimmy Boyd hit is cute and cuddly alright, but the hick hillbilly inflection is pretty darned great. Certainly a big influence on Ronnie Spector -- her version is on "A Christmas Gift For You".

6. COLLINS KIDS - "Make Him Behave"

Lorrie, 14, wants little Larry, 12, to scram so she can be with her boyfriend (he should had stayed right where he was. When she up and married Johnny Cash's road manager in 1958 at age 16 she broke up the greatest rockabilly duo of all time!). Larry's lines like "She's eatin' candy and she won't give me none!" are truly profound comments on the eternal conflict between man and woman.



JAKE AUSTEN (OCTOBER EDITOR)

1. AKIM "Santa Claus Is A Black Man"

An unbelievable, undeniable pro-Black, heartwarming Santa song sung by a toddler in a cracking voice. The back up singing is amazing, and the loving tone his father talks to "Kimy" always makes me feel good. The best part is Akim's spoken refrain, "He looked a lot like you, he was handsome, he was Black, he had an afro, he was really outasite!"

2. NEW EDITION "Popcorn Love"

When they came out I was a little pissed because I thought they were Jackson 5 ripoffs and folks were forgetting about the J5, especially after I heard a DJ refer to the English post-NE act 5 Star as New Edition soundalikes. But there's no denying the joyousness of the raw Bubblegum doo wop on their debut album, and this song is awesome!

3. JORDY "Dur dur d'etre Baby"

The idea of a baby singing pop, and consequently singing about how tough it is to be a baby, is genius...and somehow him being French makes it even better. An English version is included on the 12" of this early 90s dance classic, which means, unlike someone who could read a phonetic translation, Jordy (being too young to read) was likely fed one word at a time and it was punched in syllable by syllable. I heard Shelly Fabres had to do the same thing on, "Johnny Angel," but that had more to do with vocal limitations than a language barrier. I once saw the mighty French toddler perform live on TV, and his mom had to stand on the side of the stage with a balloon to even somewhat keep his attention on the task at hand. In his music video he bridges boundaries by toddling around with a little Black French baby girl (or maybe she was an American expatriate...*La Enfant Baker!*). Speaking of salt and pepper pairings, last year MTV had a promo where a N'SYNC fan white girl and hip hop Black boy are screaming and pumped up, ready for some jams, and then Jordy Grammar starts playing and they scream again. As far as I'm concerned, to use Jordy's tune as a signifier of bad music is more shocking than anything on MTV ever dreamed up for *Jackass*, Tom Green or Beavis.

3. BUBBA STRAIT on George Strait's "Pure Country"

In the movie that this appears in, and on the soundtrack record, this song opens with the sour sounds of George's son, and it's really something else to hear his strained voice transmute into his father's smooth familiar tones.

4. LIL' ROMEO "My Baby"

Master P's son is sent out on No Limit soldier maneuvers to impersonate Lil' Bow Wow, and he kicks LBW's tail! He has twice the charisma of his dad, which means almost none, but he's not as swamy as Bow Wow and he seems like a real kid.

5. HEINTJE "Ich sing' ein Lied für dich"

Something about a German lad in a nice sweater with a big smile singing traditional Teutonic kiddie songs/pop is oddly soothing yet deeply disturbing. If he were blonde maybe I'd be fully disturbed, but as a brown haired lad I can be pleasantly torn.

6. MINIPOPS

English tykes that do covers of Abba, Blondie, Motown and Village People...and they even dress like the Village People with fake gay moustaches on the back cover! Grating and great at the same time!

7. CRAIG HUNDLEY TRIO "Arrival Of A Young Giant"

14 year old piano prodigy Hundley's debut LP boasted of his 184 IQ, his humility and his success as a TV actor on "Lassie" and "Flying Nun." What makes the Howdy Doody look-a-like's first record better than his second is that here he's a gimmick act with a full kid band. Jay Jay Wiggins, a 4' 4" Black bass player playing a miniature stand up bass and 14 year old drummer Gary Chase (a protégé of Louie Belson) help deliver the Jazzy pop covers.

8. KRISS KROSS "Jump"

C'mon! A JAM sung by little kids wearing backwards clothing. I LOVE the ad for Sprite where they throw a party inside a pop can.

9. CHILDREN OF THE WORLD "Why"

A bizarre kids chorus augmented by the unintelligible narration of Herve Villechaize. Special!

10. THE GOBLINS FEATURING THE CHILDREN OF THE MILLENNIUM CHORUS "Millennium Reprise" I was in the studio when these kids recorded this and it was amazing...children are the future!

DOMENIC PRIORE (HAPPENING SUNSET STRIP EXPERT)

1. Anything by the CHIPMUNKS

2. Anything by the NUTTY SQUIRRELS

3. T.J. & THE FOURMATIONS singing "Hey Hey Ronnie" in THE COOL ONES

4. THE BANTAMS singing "I'm So Happy" in THE COOL ONES

5. That little girl singing "Baby Likes to Rock" by the pool in ROCK ROCK ROCK

BOB ABRAHAMIAN (THE ROSS BAGDASARIAN OF DUSTIES DJs) TOP 10 BEST KIDS SOUL RECORDS

1. JACKSON 5 - "ABC"

2. FIVE STAIRSTEPS - "Danger She's a Stranger"

Awesome sophisticated slow soul tune by one of the greatest soul groups of all time. This song is even better than the already awesome early stuff by the Sylvers and the Brighter Side of Darkness.

3. JACKSON SISTERS "I Believe in Miracles"

Mindblowing mid-70s dance jam with the sisters (unrelated to the Jackson 5) singing over super-punchy horns and nice guitar.

4. BRIGHTER SIDE OF DARKNESS "Love Jones"

Huge hit, trashy school boy-to-school girl jivey monologue (the singer is so spaced-out in love that he left his test for Mr. Russel's class *completely blank* except for his name!) over nice 70s groove. He also tells his girl that he doesn't want to bore her with a long "irrelevant" conversation.

5. FOSTER SYLVERS "Misdemeanor"

Great Jackson 5-style jam, Foster Sylvers was so young so you can't really understand what he's saying. Even the rappers who sampled the song didn't worry about including the lyrics because they don't sound like words.

6. SPOONBREAD "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart?"

Great 70s slow jam with trashy spoken monologue. The singer tells the grownups to turn off their radios because they don't believe that kids can fall in love, "I mean really, really in love."

7. PONDEROSA TWINS + ONE "Bound"

Nice crooning sophisticated slow tune, better than their J-5 style jams.

8. CINDY AND THE PLAYMATES "What Are You Gonna Do Now That School Is Through?"

Local Chicago record, awesome because it combines a discoey Jackson-style jam (with a female lead singer) with the teen monologue. The girl describes meeting in the park and taking a LONG walk in the dark, at the end of the track the boy says that they're just going to lay around and just take it easy.

9. 21st CENTURY "Remember The Rain?"

Nice slow 70s tune with sad crooning vocals about how the boy singer and his girl used to play out in the rain, break rules in school, and get yelled at by their parents before his girl left. Also has trashy reminiscing monologue. The singer sounds like Michael Jackson.

10. MICHAEL HUDSON "The Good Guy Always Gets The Girl"

Nice jam with Jackson 5 style guitar and cheesy synth keyboards. Also has the lyrics "love's like chili pepper / the right amount is fine / a little bit leaves you hungry girl / and too much blows your mind"

TOP 5 WORST KIDS SOUL SONGS

1. HERMIE "Hermie's Prayer"

Local Chicago hit around 1968. Terrible little rascals style monologue (over a Gossypily backing track) by a really little kid praying for things like his parents staying together.

2. AKIM "Santa Claus Is A Black Man"

Trashy monologue by a little kid who walks in on his parents at Christmas, has terrible grownup backing vocals too.

3. FIVE STAIRSTEPS "New Dance Craze"

For some reason the Burke family thought their (not really kid oriented at all) soul wasn't good enough and that they needed to add Cubie (who I think was 3 at the time) as a gimmick. Cubie screams barely-understandable lyrics about all the new dances over a funky instrumental. This song is partly redeemed by the fact that it has a nice loop that's been sampled a couple of times.

4. BROTHERLY LOVE "Mama's Little Baby Loves Loving"

This song is almost a nice jam but is ruined by the subject matter -- it's a kid singing a love song to his mother. He knows that despite his small size, he's old enough to know he loves her (and that the older guys don't know what's good).

5. MARC COPAGE "Will It Be Me?"

The crazy funky fuzz guitar almost makes this song good. Marc Copage screams "will it be him, or will it be me?" over the instrumental. Marc Copage was a child star and was on the TV sitcom *Julia* and in a bunch of shows at the time.

Kids Soul Fact: Both the Jackson Sisters and the Ponderosa Twins + One covered the original kids soul song: Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers' "Why Do Fools Fall In Love?"



PHIL MILSTEIN (SONG POEM ENTHUSIAST) MY FAVORITE KID MUSICIANS

OLD SKULL
CRAIG HUNDLEY TRIO
THE BANTAMS
HAYLEY MILLS
SUGAR CHILE ROBINSON
LITTLE RICKEY

VELCRO LEWIS (METAL GOD/SANTA FOR HIRE)

VELCRO'S FAVORITE KIDS (no particular order)

1. CHRISTIAN DEATH "I Hate You"

Only from the mind of a child comes, "...you can pick the wee bits out of my poo and eat it!" A great heavy metal song with, Savant, the son of Valor, singing. He seems adamant about telling everyone how much he hates you, and he is damn good at it. I've never heard a kid swear so fluently without fear of a backslap

2. JORDY 'Its Hard Being A Baby'

An early 90s Euro-dance classic, the music of Ce Ce Peniston, the words of a small baby. Its hard being a baby, especially when your daddy keeps stashing his mic in your crib.

3. DEATH KIDS 1997 DEMO

Two kids and their pappy play an impressive bit of death metal. At the time of this recording, the bassist was 11, and rockin' out on stage while a metal panties-clad stripper teased the pre-pubesence out of him.

4. ANOTHER BAD CREATION "Aiesha"

This song from ABC's debut album is a classic example of a boy sweatin' over a middle-school hottie. Aiesha goes over to his house, plays Nintendo for a bit, and then leaves, keeping him guessing about the tact of his game. From New Edition's/BellBivDevoe's Michael Bivins, the creator of Boyz II Men. (Editor's note: in addition to playing Nintendo at his house, she also ate cereal. "We played Nintendo-o-o-o...We ate cerea-a-a-l..." is one of my all time favorite "rhymes.")

5. 12,000 GIRL SCOUTS SING AMERICA'S NATIONAL FAVORITES

12,000 singing girl scouts? Ohh dear, how heavenly! Realized July, 1965, at the Girl Scout Round-up, held in Farragut, Idaho, the girls recite such faves as "Kum-ba-yah", "Swing Low Sweet Chariot", and "America the Beautiful." When played on 33 1/3, this record sounds amazing. Like a gaggle of Sirens and wonderful succubi crooning away on their remote isle, just waiting for some drunken pirates...

6. ROBERT DELANEY RADIO SHOW

This is one of my favorite records ever! A found recording of a cub scout producing his own radio show alone in his tent with his boombox. Not only does lil' Robert sing yesterday's chart toppers like "little flea, get off of me," and "you little turd," he also gives commentary on another boy named Robert. We learn that the other Robert just happens to be a little shit, from listening to the song, "You Little Shit, Get Off My Tit". The one sided 7 inch has etchings of hypodermic needles on it's flipside.

7. SPECIAL MUSIC FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE

"Fire Fighter" is a bad ass biker rock tune about fightin' church fires like it's no body's business. Makes me wanna burn shit in hopes that lil' Arturo, the singer, will fly over with the quickness and do some extinguishing...just for fun.

8. OLD SKULL- "Get Outta School"

"Jesus Dead On a Cross" and "Love is Hell" speaks to this band's generation- 10 year olds who are way fed up with society's ills. Huh? More talented than Wattie Buchan ever was. Even though Old Skull's second record isn't as charming since the band learned how to play, but 'Get Outta School' is very funny and will always make me wanna have kids.



9. KIDS, INC.- Soundtrack from the television show.

I think Martika and Jennifer Love Hewitt are on this LP. I have been waiting for one of these KIDS to pop up either in porn or as Vitamin C. The songs are horrid, but are very useful when you need to clear out a party, and that justifies me liking it. Right?

10. OLIVER- Soundtrack from the popular play

I have always loved this play/movie and always find myself humming that song about pickin' pockets when I shop lift. I think about how great it would be to have a mentor who can show me how to survive outta the trash and rip off rubes left and right. Dirty faced kids in a garbage can. Sweet tunes a plenty...

JUJU BEE (DISCO GODDESS) and

WAYMON TIMBSDAYLE (CRITIC/ASSHOLE)

TOP 10 MICHAEL JACKSON KID THEMED RECORDS

Michael is definitely the child star with the most success as an adult, and the Jackson 5 were one of the most consistent child acts ever. Over the years he's really kept up with the Kid Song world by working with young acts, putting kids on his records, and writing songs about the children of the world. Here are some highlights and lowlights....

1. JACKSON FIVE "Big Boy"

This is their pre-Motown single on Steeltown Records and though it has none of the Motown Machine Magic production wise, it has charms that really highlight super young Michael's specialness. His voice is feminine (hearing this, I would never think it was a boy), and like a child trying to please his teacher, his awkward phrasing has a kind of mannered properness that belies half assed training rather than real professionalism. This voice and phrasing are juxtaposed with lyrics declaring how he wants to be treated like a man. Somehow these elements combine for a raw, soulful song that really showcases Michael as a unique, intense talent. Best part: "Fairy Tales" being pronounced "Fairy Tawos."

2. JACKSON FIVE "Young Folks"

The Motown folks tried to put Voice Of The Youth words in the J5's mouths often, but this is the most convincing. After a military marching drum intro, Michael declares, "You better make way for the young folks...we're here for business buddy, and don't want no jive!" Certainly the lyrics are far from revolutionary, evoking a generic, issue-free concept of trendy activism ("We're marching with signs, we're standing in line, protesting your rights to turn out the lights in our lives.") but Michael's delivery elevates it. With more Black English pronunciations ("We ax you why...") and angry tones than usual, and an air of seriousness that makes this stand out amongst J5 songs, this really has surprising power.

3. JACKSON FIVE "ABC"

Textbook bubblegum (super slick pop using kids subject matter, in this case school, as a metaphor for love/sex) that somehow seems as funky and textured as the Sly Stone music it was patterned after. Opening with a call and response example of Doo Wop for the new generation, this works its way through some great J5 harmonies and Michael leads. After a jazzy cymbal solo (!) representative of the stellar level of Motown musicianship, Michael hollers, "SIT DOWN GIRL.. I think I love you! Naw, GET UP GIRL, show me what you can do!" Whoa!

4. MICHAEL JACKSON "The Love You Save"

If it worked on "ABC," why not do it again? More school book imagery is evoked, with Isaac (Newton), Benjie (Franklin), Alexander (Graham Bell) and Christopher (Columbus) as rival suitors for the J5's objects of affection. I love when they spell/cheerlead, ("S is for save me, T is for take it slow, O is for oh no, P is for please,

please don't go!"). I also like that Jermaine is featured as much as Michael. Speaking of MJ, he is really a polished professional on this, enunciating "I'm" like he was trained by top diction coaches. But the heavy Motown workload has added a hoarseness to his voice, and that gravel compensates for any loss of raw soulfulness.

5. MICHAEL JACKSON "Ben"

Michael sings this song *really* sensitively, and he genuinely sounds lonely. This record was the theme to *Ben*, the sequel to the rat horror movie, *Willard*, about a boy who befriends a murderous rodent. The original issue of this LP features Michael with thousands of rats scurrying underneath him (see magazine cover). Many theorize that Michael's llama loving strangeness and many social problems later in life might stem from the fact that the best love song they gave him was directed at a rat. Or perhaps he's able to sing better than he

would on a love song to a girl because he, at this age, liked animals more than girls and was finally given a song he could understand. It's hard too say, but this is definitely a classic. Barry Manilow, by the way, regularly performs this in concert.

6. JACKSON FIVE "I Want You Back"

Michael's phrasing and voice still have some of that rawer "Big Boy" sound. The backup harmonies are tight, the groove (especially the bass line) is kinda deep for bubblegum. Jermaine and Michael are separated on channels, presaging years of jealousy and strife. Great congas, too.

7. JACKSON FIVE "The Day Basketball Was Saved"

This is from the soundtrack to their "Goin' Back To Indiana" TV special, and it's RIDICULOUS! This 8 minute skit, narrated by Bill Cosby, features the Cos and cast (including a very funny Tommy Smothers, Rosey Grier, Bill Russell, Elvin Hayes, Elgin Baylor and Ben Davidson) rapping/Broadway talk-singing over generic Vaudeville/Carnival music. This is likely the best Motown song with a laugh track! This cautionary tale tells the story of The Dream Team, a basketball team so good that their very existence threatened to make the game obsolete. Of course, when another unbeatable Dream Team emerged in the Olympics almost 20 years later it didn't actually kill the game...or did it? Well that's neither here nor there, because we have a record to describe. The Jackson boys challenge the Dream Team to a game, and are actually beating them at halftime. Deviously the DT decides to exploit the J5's youth by sending over free all-you-can-eat peanuts and popcorn. Despite Jackie's oldest-and-wisest warnings, the kids eat themselves sick and fall out with the J5 one basket behind. Jackie then saves the day, and the game of basketball! I really love the way that Jackie (and not Michael or Jermaine) gets to be the hero.



8. JACKSON FIVE "Going Back To Indiana" live

This is a tough, inspired version from the TV soundtrack. The Indiana concertgoing crowd loves them and Michael really delivers. Faster than the original version, they are jamming here on one of their strongest tunes with lotsa nice touches, including Tito's guitar solo and the baiting of the crowd with a false ending. And best of all, when they do the cheerleader section of the song where they mention Roosevelt High, the RH students go nuts! The fantastic version would be enough, but as a bonus it opens with some prime banter/schtick where Michael refuses to do the song ("uh uh.. Noooo...") until Marlon asks the crowd, "do you want Michael to tell you?" to which he responds, "Well..." and then howls into the lyric.

9. STEVIE WONDER "You Haven't Done Nothing"

One of Stevie's jamminest tunes (all about ineffective politicians ignoring the needs of the young and righteous), this has an awesome guest appearance. After the second chorus Stevie declares something like, "Jackson Five Doo along with me!" They back him up with some sweet, "Doo doo wop, Doo doo wop," and after the next chorus Stevie interjects, "Sing it, Jackie" and "Sing it loud for your people!"

10. JACKSON FIVE "Dancing Machine"

Michael is almost grown on this one, but it's worth including because it's one of the best songs they ever did. This great space/robot effect laden tune is enhanced by the fact that Michael (with genius level talent) did the dance "The Robot" whenever they performed it.

BOTTOM 10 MICHAEL JACKSON KID THEMED RECORDS

1. MICHAEL JACKSON "Little Susie"

From the "HIStory" LP, this qualifies as a prime "Michael Lost His Mind" song. It's about a little dead girl and starts with minutes of pseudo Eastern European classical music, building to a frail child's voice (sung by little Markita Prescott) before going into a confounding morbid song about the fragile beauty of this unjustly deceased corpse-child.



2. MICHAEL JACKSON "Heal The World"

From "Dangerous," this song is absurdly derivative of "We Are The World" and "Man In The Mirror." Trying to recapture that "healer of the children of earth" vibe, he decides to up it a notch by adding the John Bahler Singers children's choir and ending everything with a solo child's voice (Crista Larson) emerging like a point of light for a final, lingering slathering of ultra-corny hyper-sentimentality.

3. MICHAEL JACKSON "The Best of Michael Jackson" LP cover I don't know why, but I just can't stand him posing with a dove on the record cover.

4. MICHAEL JACKSON "Black or White" video

McCauley Culkin makes a guest appearance opening this video as a kid who's loud, generic rock music annoys his dad, George Wendt. This ripoff of the Twisted Sister videos features a Culkin that is so charmless and awful that it makes you wish Webster was still young enough to do this when the time came.

5. JACKSON 5IVE "Christmas Wont Be The Same This Year" intro From the "Jackson Christmas Album," this pretty good song opens with a spoken skit. The boys all wish us a Merry Christmas, to which Jermaine responds, "Big deal." Up to this point they are only marginally stiff, but the first oddly robotic line follows, as one of the lads says, "Yeah that's no kind of at-ti-toood." Then comes one of the most amazing moments on a J5 record, where a Jackson (I think Tito, but I'm not sure) delivers a line incredibly awkwardly, making odd pronunciations based on nothing in his background. I've often suspected it is the Swedish Motown janitor filling in after too much tape was wasted with flubs: "Hey, *fëllas* don' *bög* him, he and his girl just *bröke* up, so get off his back...can't you see there's *tearsh* in his eyes?" Then in unison they all respond, "Y-e-a-h he's c-r-y-I-n-g." Very strange.

6. MICHAEL JACKSON "Dear Michael"

Supposedly based on a fan letter, this concept has been done better by rock groups in the 60s, and this particular song would be done more convincingly in the 80s by Kim Fields.

7. 3T

Tito's three kids were signed to Michael's label MJJ Music, and Michael even helped out on their album. They try pretty hard, and you can sometimes hear some actual Jackson-esque stuff in their voices (good and bad). But they try to be too sexy too young, they have bad material (Tito doesn't write too good) and Michael's production ain't helping matters. They didn't have a chance.

8. MICHAEL JACKSON "Childhood"

Not featuring children, but about them. This theme song to *Free Willy 2* is a pseudo broadway sentimental lament to his lost youth. "Have you seen my childhood...?"

9. TATYANA ALI "Daydreamin'"

Michael signed the *Fresh Prince's* TV co-star to MJJ Music after Will introduced them. The song, with a Steely Dan sample and Lord Tariq and Peter Gunz guest rapping, is kinda ok, EXCEPT THAT HER VOICE IS TERRIBLE! The kindest thing I can say is that she sings like a sitcom actress.

10. JACKSON 5IVE "Teenage Symphony"

This J5 tune is a vastly inferior variation on "Young Folks" that introduces the pseudo bombast that years later infects most of Michael's post "Bad" work. After a stiff spoken intro by Jermaine explaining how music is "a universal language," Michael sings a song written by adults in the voice of the young awkwardly using hep

jive. At one point the importance of the song is demonstrated by Michael imploring, "Listen..." in the exact tone and phrasing as on the Spinal Tap song "Listen To What The Flower People Say."

BONUS: FUNNIEST HIP HOP SAMPLES/REMAKES OF THE J5:

LIL ROMEO "My Baby"

Not only does this use the music and words from "I Want You Back," but in the video Master P. even has his son Romeo hang out with a Michael impersonator ...who is dressed as the 90s Michael! I guess P doesn't believe the rumors.

NAUGHTY BY NATURE "OPP" remix

The hit single samples "ABC," but the remix samples Michael's vocals!

MC HAMMER "Dancing Machine"

He changes the lyrics to, "Watch me get down, as I do my thing on the video screen!" That update really pays tribute to Michael's influence, though Hammer would later have a video where he challenges and destroys a symbolic Michael Jackson (with the real James Brown's blessing).



Top: "Big Boy" era, Below: Tarryl, Tito, Jr. and Taj...soon to be 3T!





From Left to Right: Jairzinho, Toby, Simony and Mike.

BY BRIAN MIER

Brazil is a huge country where novelty songs still regularly make the charts. During the past 20 years there have been hit records by people in dog costumes, clowns, dwarves, dancing Catholic priests, transvestites and more frequently, singing children. A **Turma Do Balao Magico** (The Magic Balloon Gang), was a group of singing children who had a morning variety show on the Globo television network in the 80s and paved the way for the Xuxa show. During their heyday, they regularly packed soccer stadiums, including Rio's Maracana, which held 150,000 people. What sets A **Turma do Balao Magico** apart from other groups of their ilk, is that, instead of singing watered down, sugary pop songs, they collaborated with some of Brazil's greatest musicians, including Djavan, Raul Seixas and Erasmo Carlos. They started off with three members, Toby, Simony, and Mike. At the height of their fame, they added a fourth, Jairzinho. A **Turma do Balao Magico** were the best kiddie band to come out of Brazil during the past 30 years, but it is the individual stories of the groups members that earns them the title of "kiddy supergroup."

MIKE

In 1963 Ronald Biggs participated in a Train robbery that was the biggest theft in British History. He was arrested, escaped from jail, got plastic sugary, hid in France and Australia and eventually made his way to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 1973 he was captured by British agents and arrested, but when it was discovered that his girlfriend was pregnant the authorities released him because Brazil does not extradite expectant fathers. His girlfriend gave birth to a son who they named Mike. In 1978, Paul Cook and Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols, and their svengali, Malcom McClaren came to Brazil to visit Biggs with a film crew. Biggs wrote and recorded "No One is Innocent" with them, and it became the last hit record every recorded by the Sex Pistols. In 1981 Ronnie Biggs was kidnapped by a group of ex-Scottish Royal Guardsman and taken on a sailboat to Barbados, where he awaited another extradition trial. During the ordeal one of Biggs' English friends visited young Mike repeatedly to cheer him up, putting on a clown nose and mustache and teaching him some old British show tunes like "Knees up Mother Brown." The Brazilian press covered Biggs' kidnapping ordeal and reporters from *Fantastico* (a kind of Brazilian 60 minutes) visited young Mike at home. During the segment he tearfully pleaded, "I know the Queen of England wants my dad, but I need him too, to take care of me." Then he did an old English song and dance number that his father's friend had taught him. Brazilian TV viewers went nuts. The Barbadian judge refused to extradite Biggs and he was flown back to Brazil. When he arrived, Globo representatives 50

called him up and offered a place for young Mike on the new show they were developing, *Turma do Balao Magico*. Ronald Biggs says that by 1981 all his train robbery money was gone, and that Mike's earnings supported them both during the 80s and paid for their house in Rio's bohemian Santa Teresa neighborhood. When Biggs published his autobiography, *Odd Man Out*, a few years ago, he infuriated British authorities by sending Mike, who was 19 at the time, on a book signing tour through England. Today he considers his son Mike a miracle child. Sadly, Mike was in the news again earlier this year, negotiating his father's return to British prisons with the London Tabloid *The Sun*.

JAIRZINHO

Jair Rodrigues was one of the members of the *Joven Guarda*, or Young Guard. The *Joven Guarda* was a group of musicians who rose to fame during the mid-60s including Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa, Chico Buarque, Roberto and Erasmo Carlos, and Ellis Regina. Rodrigues' sound was the most samba based of any of the *Joven Guarda*. He had dozens of hit records, including one which had an early "rap" in it and was covered in the US by Connie Francis as "The Bossa Nova Hand Dance." During the 70s Rodrigues continued to sing, invested in the real estate market and became a major player in the recording industry. At the height of **Turma do Balao Magico's** popularity they decided to add another member and offered the position to Jair Rodrigues' son Jairzinho (little Jair). According to Biggs, Simony's parents complained about adding a black kid to the group, but that he supported it, saying that, "Jairzinho inherited all the talent from his father." Today Jairzinho, who is now in his early 20s, is a successful MPB singer in Brazil. (note: MPB stands for Brazilian pop. It is an umbrella term that covers many genres, but does not typically include Samba, Forro or Lambada)

SIMONY

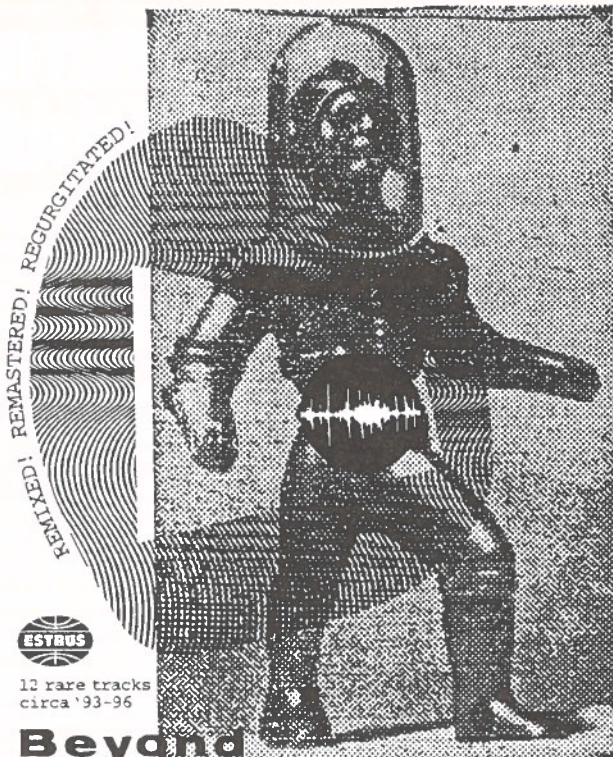
Of all the ex-members of **Turma do Balao Magico**, Simony is the most successful today. After A **Turma** broke up she started recording romantic ballads and has had a series of gold records. She has also posed nude for Brazilian Playboy. According to Ron Biggs, Simony came from a family of circus performers. In his autobiography he says that her parents, especially her mother, ruthlessly fought to get her more camera time and a bigger share of the profits than the other members of the group. When Simony became a teenager she began to rebel against her parents. First, she dated Mike Biggs, which infuriated them. Last February she announced to the press that she was pregnant and that the expectant father was Afro-X, a Brazilian rap star who is currently doing a 5 year sentence for bank robbery in Carinduru prison. Carinduru, Latin America's largest prison, made headlines around the world in 1993 when a group of military police shot 111 unarmed prisoners in the backs of their heads after an uprising. Last April, during family visitation

day, an organized crime group known as PCC (*primera commanda do capital*) revolted and took hundreds of visitors and guards as hostages, forcing them to lie on the ground in the main courtyard. The Brazilian media went into a frenzy when they discovered that there, in the middle of the courtyard was Simony, who was 6 months pregnant, hugging Afro-X. The crisis continued for 3 days. On Sundays Brazilian television is dominated by seemingly never-ending variety shows. That Sunday, all the shows broke into their usual routines to show video footage of Simony and her boyfriend in the prison courtyard. By the following Sunday the crisis had ended (with only a few deaths) and Simony appeared on the *Gugu* variety show. She sang one of her ballads, then answered questions from the announcer about the hostage crisis. She began to cry, and violin music rose in the background. "You know," she sobbed, "you see these people coming on TV calling all the prisoners animals and things, but its not true. Some of them aren't even guilty. My boyfriend knows what he did was wrong, and he's sorry. People can make mistakes you know and people can change too. They are people and they deserve to be treated that way." This was a brave thing to do in Brazil, a country where over 50% of the murders and a large percentage of the kidnappings are committed by the police and where no one has ever been put in jail for the Carinduru massacre. After the broadcast the police accused her of being a member of the PCC and subpoenaed her. Since she could afford a good lawyer, they couldn't get any of their far-fetched charges to stick.

TOBY

Toby was the only member of the group to disappear from the spotlight after the break up (Mike regularly makes the news because of his father). Ronald Biggs says that Toby and Simony's parents aligned themselves with each other in every dispute with management. As a result Toby was frequently pictured in the center of the frame next to Simony on record covers and publicity photos. Today, Toby's only media moments are his occasional public comments on Simony's antics.

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LOU CHRISTIE & THE TAMMYS: EGYPTIAN SHUMBA

by Harry Young

Tight pants. High falsetto. Smooth baritone. Wild eyes. Pouting lips. Wicked moves. Gyrating hips. Something extra. Something mysterious. Something special. Welcome to the world of Lou Christie.
~ *EnLightnin'ment: The Best Of Lou Christie*

He has the surname of a savior, the Gypsy green eyes of a visionary, the lyrical sense of a poet and the five octave voice of an angel. Lou Christie has it all. Five million-sellers. Twenty-seven chart items. Ethnicity. Electricity. Sanctity. Sexuality. Fantasy. Reality. The history and mystery of Lou Christie.
~ *Beyond The Blue Horizon: More Of The Best Of Lou Christie*

"Lightnin' Strikes" **Lou Christie** has created many extremely GREAT (and often, greatly extreme) slices of sound excitement. He's recorded Pop, R&B, Dance, Adult Contemporary, Country, Rap and more. He even sang back-up on the RADICAL Abstract Russian Language Poetry / Electronic Music Manifesto 'Walks Under A Northern Sky' by Dmitri Strizhov & Obermaneken (DS001, Ripe & Ready CD 7001, 1998). Whatever the style, Lou's recordings always include massive amounts of energy and innovation.

In the 1960's, The Pharaoh of the Falsetto frequently operated in Soulful synergy with chanting females. Case in point: **The Tammys** (Gretchen, Cathy and Linda). Powered by Lou Christie-penned anthems like "Egyptian Shumba" and "Part Of Growing Up", The Tammys' edgy harmonies and rampant emotions found release on three hopelessly rare solo singles. Years after their 1965 break-up, interest in The Tammys was sparked anew, prompting the first-ever comprehensive compilation '**Egyptian Shumba: The Singles And Rare Recordings 1962-1964**' (RPM CD 330).

Anticipating the '**Egyptian Shumba**' CD, Tammys leader Gretchen Owens Wagner said, 'Lou and The Tammys were more than a group of musicians. We were, and are, friends. The release of the CD will cement the continuation of that relationship with Lou and perhaps introduce a new generation to his great lyrics and unique musical style'.



Beaver, PA, 4 January 1964. Back row left to right: Karen Gray (The Secrets), Cathy Owens (The Tammys) hair only, Gretchen Owens (The Tammys). Front row: Patty Miller (The Secrets), Dionne Warwick, Lou Christie, KDKA DJ Clark Race, unknown child, Linda Jones (The Tammys).

Lou Christie was born Lugee Alfredo Giovanni Sacco, 19 February 1943 in Glenwillard, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. He first hit the charts doing backgrounds on "Ronnie" by Marcy Jo (Robbee single R-110, KFWB Los Angeles #9, Variety #27, Cash Box #64, Billboard review 27 March 1961, #81). He also sang on Marcy Jo's "Since Gary Went In The Navy" (Robbee single R-115, Billboard 26 June 1961) and Chic Christy's "With This Kiss" (HAC single H-103, Billboard 11 December 1961).

Lou composed hundreds of tunes with a striking Bohemian Gypsy named Twyla Herbert (b. 27 July 1921). He explained, 'Twyla is a genius. She was going to be a concert pianist but we started writing rock 'n' roll. The hardest part was that we had too many ideas. If we wanted to write a song, it would never stop'.

The first Christie-Herbert collaboration was recorded at Glenn Campbell's United Recording Service, Pittsburgh, in September 1962: "The Gypsy Cried" (C and C single 102 B, Roulette single R-4457 B, Billboard Four Star review 20 October 1962, #24, Cash Box 27 October 1962, #18, UK Columbia single DB 4983, NME ad 8 March 1963).

Billboard: 'Some mighty tantalizing high note work from the lad on this ballad with a beat. He is backed by a chorus of chicks and strong rhythm combo'.

Cash Box: (B+) "The Gypsy Cried" (2:05) [Nom & RTD BMI—Herbert, Sacco] 'The rock trade could really take to this exciting track from the songster and his combo-chorus backing, which includes a strong falsetto vocal gimmick. A deck that's got to be watched closely'.

Lou cut the sequel at Bob Schachner's Gateway Studio, Pittsburgh, 6 February 1963: "Two Faces Have I" (Roulette single R-4481, Billboard mention 2 March 1963, Pop #6, R&B #11, Cash Box 30 March 1963, #3, Variety #4, UK Columbia single DB 7031, NME ads 26 April and 17 May 1963). Guitarist Ronnie Cochrane and Joni (Johnny) Wilson's Debonaires played on the session. Twyla Herbert pounded out piano counterpoints to the chugging organ, greatly enhancing the song's Ska / Reggae flavour. Listen for the one delicious cymbal smack!

Cash Box: (Pick Of The Week) "Two Faces Have I" (2:44) [Painted Desert, RTD BMI—Herbert, Christie] 'Christie is already kicking up a chart fuss with this powerful follow-up to his "Gypsy Cried" hit Roulette bow. This one's a cha cha twister, tabbed "Two Faces Have I", that Lou delivers in catchy falsetto-voiced style. Strong combo-chorus support'.

Breaking in different markets at different times, "The Gypsy Cried" and "Two Faces Have I" were regional super-smashes. For example, "The Gypsy Cried" hit #1 on Pittsburgh's KQV and WYRE as well as Franklin, PA's WFRA. "Two Faces Have I" shot to #1 on Chicago's WLS and Milwaukee's WOKY and WRIT.

According to Gene Sculatti's liner notes for Madonna's 'Immaculate Collection' (released 13 November 1990), 'When she chirps "That's right!" and "No way!" on the second and fourth verses [of "Material Girl"], she sounds uncannily like Lou Christie fading on "Two Faces Have I" (1963)'.

"Two Faces Have I" even influenced Bruce Springsteen. Reviewing Springsteen's 'Tunnel Of Love' (released 9 October 1987), the Orange County Register noted, 'There's little on the album that isn't reminiscent of something else...such as "Two Faces", which has the same "Two Faces Have I" chorus as the '60s Lou Christie song of that title'. The Globe And Mail: 'Perhaps the song that most vividly captures Springsteen's

ambivalence about the tender trap of domesticity is "Two Faces", which lifts its principal line, "Two Faces Have I", from the Lou Christie hit of 1963'. San Francisco Chronicle: 'He's learned that love alone is not a panacea. It's implicit in the self-doubt of "Two Faces", which echoes the Lou Christie song, "Two Faces Have I", with Springsteen playing a carnival organ break a la "96 Tears"'.

Lou recorded the magnificent Herbert-Christie composition "Summer Snow" at Gateway during the first week of May 1963. Written as his third Roulette single and almost included on 'Lou Christie' (Roulette album SR-25208, Cash Box 3 August 1963, #82), the original "Summer Snow" remained unreleased until 'EnLightnin'ment: The Best Of Lou Christie' (Rhino CD R2 70246, Billboard 26 March 1988). Why? Roulette president Morris Levy (d. 21 May 1990) allegedly did not "understand" --or own the publishing rights to-- "Summer Snow". See Proverbs 26:1. Lou released a different "Summer Snow" on 'Painter Of Hits' (MGM album E / SE 4394, Billboard 20 August 1966).

As "Two Faces Have I" climbed Billboard's charts, Lou toured eleven states with manager Tim Tormey's Spring Shower Of Stars. On 16 May 1963, between tour dates in Rolla, Missouri and Duluth, Minnesota, at Levy's insistence, Lou Christie raced into New York City's Bell Sound Studios and cut "How Many Teardrops" (Roulette single R-4504, Cash Box review 22 June 1963, #41, WLS Chicago #19, UK Columbia single DB 7096, NME ad 23 August 1963). Roulette's Nom Music had registered "How Many Teardrops" (penned by Rick Rodell aka The Leather Boy aka Milan Radenkowich) with the Library Of Congress on 13 May 1963.

Also in May 1963, after six months of rehearsals, Lou Christie officially launched **The Tammys**, the prototypical alternative Girl Group of the 1960's.



Meet The Tammys: Margaret Gretchen Owens (b. Oil City, PA, 29 December 1944), Catherine Louise Owens (b. Oil City, PA, 15 December 1946) and Linda Lucille Jones (b. Olean, NY, 7 April 1947).

Lou's older sister, Amy, managed and chaperoned The Tammys. Amy, Kay and Twyla's daughter, Shirley, the back-up singers on "The Gypsy Cried", "Two Faces Have I" and "Summer Snow", taught The Tammys to breathe, bark and strut. Amy, Kay and Shirley had participated in The Crewnecks (Lou, Judi, Bill, Amy or Wendy, 1957-1960), The Classics (Lou, Kay, Kenny and Shirley, 1960) and Lugee And The Lions (Lou, Amy, Kay and Bill, 1961-1962, "The Jury", Robbee single R-112, Billboard 17 April 1961).

Gretchen, Cathy and Linda first met up with Lou after the Marcy Jo / Lugee And The Lions show Saturday, 27 May 1961 at the Moose Lodge in Franklin, PA. That week's WFRA Fabulous Fifty Tunedex listed Marcy Jo's "Ronnie" at #1 and Lugee And The Lions' "The Jury" at #24.

Describing a subsequent meeting at Henrys Bend, four miles from Tionesta, PA, Gretchen recalled, 'We drove around [in Lou's 1959 black Cadillac convertible]. He'd sing and we'd do back-up harmony, making it up as we went along. It was a fun night! He said, "If I get discovered, I'll call you", and we said the same thing. A year later, he released "The Gypsy Cried" and we heard it on the radio. One day my sister, Cathy, came running home and said, "He's going to be on the Clark Race [TV] show Saturday!" We watched it. A crystal ball came on and he was in the center singing. We went nuts! I called him the next day. Within a very brief period of time, we were in Pittsburgh, making arrangements to go to New York'.

Lou took The Tammys to United Artists Records, 729 Seventh Avenue, New York, 19, NY. His contact: Harvard MBA Jacob 'Jack' Gold (d. 26 December 1993). Serving as Executive Producer at United Artists' publishing affiliate, Unart Music, Gold would soon be Director of Singles Activities in the label's A&R Department. From 18 January to 15 June 1962, Lou had been under contract to Jack Gold Records, Inc.

Through the Jack Gold connection, Unart Music registered eight Christie-Herbert Copyrights with the Library Of Congress:

- 6 August 1963 "Take Back Your Ring" and "Part Of Growing Up" (both previously registered by Twyla and Lou on 8 July 1963),
- 5 September 1963 "Summer Snow" (previously 10 May 1963), "Don'tcha Backtrack", "Gypsy Earrings", "Lost In The Crowd" and "Outside The Gates Of Heaven" (previously 12 August 1963) and
- 14 February 1964 "Egyptian Shumba" (previously 5 November 1963).

The Tammys actually signed with United Artists (Ulan Music Corp.) as The Twy-Lous. The contract was dated 24 May 1963. On 3 July 1963 at Bell Sound in NYC, The Tammys recorded "Take Back Your Ring" / "Part Of Growing Up" (United Artists single UA 632, Masters 5088 / 5089, ZTSP 87390 / 87391, Billboard Four Star review 17 August 1963).

Cash Box: (B+) "Take Back Your Ring" (2:00) [Unart BMI—Herbert, Christie] 'New teen market larks—said to be protégés of Lou Christie (he's a co-cleffer on both tunes)—debut with a very pleasing blend on a pretty teen plaintive. Could get around after sufficient exposure. (B) "Part Of Growing Up" (1:53) [Unart BMI—Herbert, Christie] Gals turn to a speedy-beat format and do a solid job'.

The Tammys promoted "Take Back Your Ring" on Erie, PA's WWGA-TV 'Bandstand'. Soon "Take Back Your Ring" rocketed to #20 on Erie's WWGO Favourite Fifty Survey for the week of 6 September 1963, moving to #13, then #11, finally hitting #7 the week of 27 September 1963. Battle Winner "Take Back Your Ring" entered Erie's WJET Survey at #48 the week of 27 August 1963, hitting #34 the weeks of 10 and 17 September 1963.

GO Discovery of the Week

MY GUY
The Percells

OFFICIAL

FAVORITE 50

Erie's Most Accurate!

* denotes former GO Discovery

WEEK OF

(BW) denotes Battle Winner

SEPTEMBER 27.

This Week	Last Week	Th W.
1 TALK TO ME — Sunny & The Sunglows	12	28
2 MEAN WOMAN BLUES/BLUE BAYOU — Roy Orbison	7	27
3 BUSTED — Ray Charles	2	28
4 HONOLULU LULU — Jan & Dean	1	29
5 WHAT DOES A GIRL DO — Shirelles	13	30
6 THAT SUNDAY — Nat 'King' Cole	15	31
7 BE MY BABY — Ronettes/Tia	3	32
TAKE BACK YOUR RING — Tammys	11	33
8 I CAN'T STAY MAD AT YOU — Skeeter Davis	18	34
9 I'LL TAKE YOU HOME — Drifters	21	35
10 SUGAR SHACK — Jimmy Gilmer & The Fireballs	24	36
11 CRCSSFIRE — Orions	31	37
12 SALLY, GO ROUND THE ROSES — Joynetta	5	38
13 A WALKIN' MIRACLE — Essex (BW)	4	39
14 UPS LOUIS — Allen Wonder Land (BW)	8	

As per the Franklin, PA News-Herald's August 1963 article 'Local Trio Cuts Record; Promotion Tour Planned', 'Gretchen, 18, graduated in 1962 from St. Joseph High School and is presently employed by the Northwest Pennsylvania Bank and Trust Company. Her sister, Cathy, 16, is a senior at Venango Christian High School. Linda, 16, is a junior at Cranberry High School. The girls are aware that show business is not all glory, but they agree they "really love show business, have always wanted it and can hardly believe it has actually happened". The girls, who dress alike when making public appearances, have plans to enlarge their wardrobes in view of their upcoming tour to promote their first recording'.

During the 3 July 1963 "Take Back Your Ring" session, Kripp Johnson, Lou Christie and The Tammys cut "Lost In The Crowd" / "Don'tcha Backtrack" (Ascot single AS 2136, Masters 5090 / 5091, 20151 / 20152, released August 1963, Cash Box review 29 February 1964). The Ascot single carried the artist credit 'Ritchie & The Runarounds' in commemoration of Gretchen, Cathy and Linda's fleeting 1962 group with Ritchie D'Amico.

Cash Box: (B+) "Don'tcha Backtrack" (2:00) [Unart BMI—Herbert, Christie] 'Ritchie, in Jackie Wilson fashion, turns in an impressive number with gals in backing doing a strong up tempo sound from beginning to end. Disk can attract attention with the younger set. Ascot is distributed thru United Artists. (B) "Lost In The Crowd" (2:38) [Unart BMI—Herbert, Christie] Group proves their talent in a ballad format'.

Guest vocalist Corinthian 'Kripp' Johnson (d. 22 June 1990) had co-founded Pittsburgh's Del Vikings ("Come Go With Me", #4, 1957). The Del Vikings recorded three Twyla Herbert compositions: "I'll Never Stop Crying" (ABC Paramount single 10208 B, Billboard 3 April 1961, Cash Box #66), "Kiss Me" (ABC single 10278 B, Billboard 27 November 1961) and an early version of "Too Many Miles" (ABC single 10425 B, recorded November 1962, released March 1963).

In New York City, on 1 November 1963, The Tammys recorded "Egyptian Shumba" / "What's So Sweet About Sweet Sixteen" (United Artists single UA 678, Masters ZTSP 91047 / 91048, released November 1963, Variety review 26 February 1964, Billboard Four Star review 29 February 1964, Pittsburgh Breakout Single in Billboard 4 April 1964).

Last night I dreamed I was on the Nile /
Dancing with you Egyptian style
Way down in Egypt land / The mummies took our hand /
Egyptian Shumba
I'm gonna make that dream come real /
I'm gonna dance the way I feel
Way down in Egypt land / The mummies took our hand /
Egyptian Shumba
I heard the drum beats in my sleep OH! /
And my heart started to beat OH! /
I heard the drum beats in my sleep OH!

Cash Box: (Best Bets) "Egyptian Shumba" (2:16) [Gypsy BMI—Herbert, Christie] 'Teen lark threesome could make a chart stand with this engaging teen-dance romp. It's wild, whacky and original. Watch it'.

Variety: 'The Tammys' "Egyptian Shumba" (Gypsy, BMI) bows this trio of teenage girls in a way-out rocking ballad with a rendition that seems to go out of its way to be noisy. But that could be the sound which will make this disk step out of the pack. "What's So Sweet About Sweet Sixteen" (April, ASCAP) is an okay slow-paced entry with a typical teen lyric'.

"Egyptian Shumba" occupied the #23 position on Franklin, PA's WFRA Fabulous Fifty Soundex the week beginning 16 February 1964 (Last Week: #29).

"The Egyptian Shumba" peaked at #15 on Pittsburgh's WEEP Million Dollar Survey for the week of 28 March 1964 (Last Week: #29).

"Egyptian Shumba" entered Cleveland, Ohio's WHK Fabulous Fifty Tunedex at #45 the week of 28 March 1964, moving to #40, then #34, finally hitting #30 the week of 18 April 1964.



CATHY OWENS

LINDA JONES

GRETCHEN OWENS

Trio launched on show business career

WEEP's Million Dollar Survey

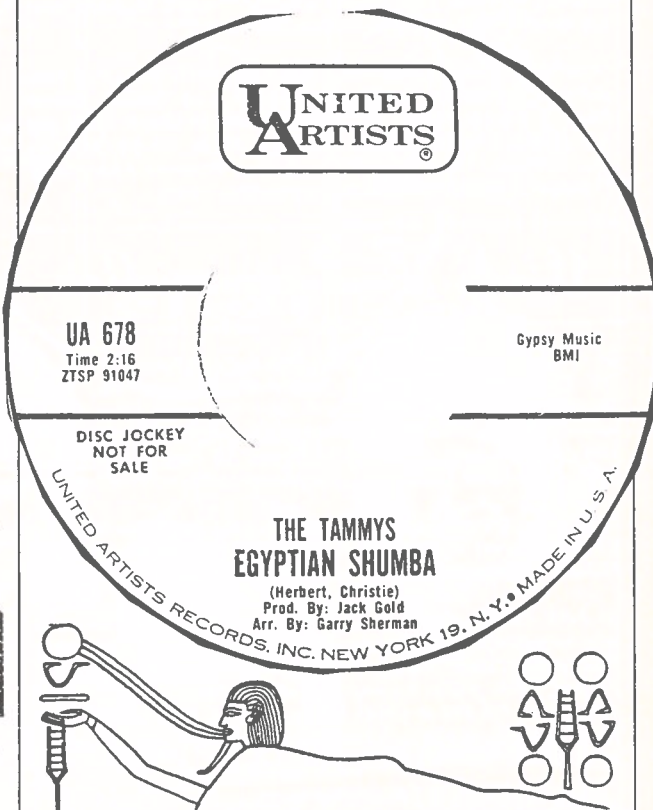
"THE STATION
WITH THE
MILLION DOLLAR
SOUND" IN
PITTSBURGH

Week of March 28, 1964

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. BEATLES-BEATLES-BEATLES-BEATLES-BEATLES | DAVE CLARK FIVE |
| 2. GLAD ALL OVER/BITS & PIECES | BRENDA LEE |
| 3. THINK | SEARCHERS |
| 4. NEEDLES & PINS/JUST LIKE ME | CHARADES |
| 5. BE MY LOVE TONIGHT | BETTY EVERETT |
| 6. THE SHOOP SHOOP SONG | ELVIS PRESLEY |
| 7. IT HURTS ME/KISSIN' COUSINS | FOUR SEASONS |
| 8. STAY | PETER, PAUL & MARY |
| 9. GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN | DANNY WILLIAMS |
| 10. WHITE ON WHITE | MARVIN GAYE |
| 11. YOU'RE A WONDERFUL ONE | MAXWELL/DANA |
| 12. SHANGRI-LA | CHUBBY CHECKER |
| 13. HEY BOBBA NEEDLE | CAREFREES |
| 14. WE LOVE YOU, BEATLES | THE TAMMYS |
| 15. THE EGYPTIAN SHUMBA | |

THE TAMMYS
★★★★ Egyptian Shumba (Gypsy,
BMI) (2:16)—★★★★ What's So Sweet
About Sweet Sixteen (April, ASCAP)
(2:30). UNITED ARTISTS 678

EGYPTIAN SHUMBA . . .
Tammys, United Artists 678 (Gypsy, BMI) (Pittsbu



Influential KDKA Pittsburgh disc jockey Clark Race (d. 27 July 1999) hosted The Tammys several times on his weekly TV 'Dance Party'. On one appearance, Clark Race asked Linda, 'What does your boyfriend think of your braces?' Linda replied, 'Nothing much—he has shredded lips!'

The Tammys supported Lou Christie at the Clark Race record hop at Beaver High School in Beaver, PA on 4 January 1964. Also on the bill that night: The Secrets and Dionne Warwick.

Four days later, on 8 January 1964, Lou Christie's final Roulette session at Bell Sound, NYC, yielded "Outside The Gates Of Heaven" and "You May Be Holding My Baby", both with The Tammys and Ellie Greenwich. The songs remained unreleased until Lou's "Lightnin' Strikes" hit #1 in February 1966.

Billboard on "Outside The Gates Of Heaven": 'With all the excitement and high-pitched vocal work of "Lightnin' Strikes" this one has the hit potential of all the Christie records currently in release'.

Billboard's charts of 19 March, 26 March and 2 April 1966 contained **FIVE** Lou Christie records: "Outside The Gates Of Heaven" (Co & Ce single 235, Billboard 26 February 1966, #45, UK King single KG 1036, NME 8 July 1966), "Big Time" (Colpix), "Lightnin' Strikes" (MGM), the 'Lightnin' Strikes' album (MGM) and the **banned** "makin' out" version of "Rhapsody In The Rain" (MGM).

Despite competition from three other Lou Christie singles, the two-year-old "Outside The Gates" hit #9 on Oshawa, Ontario's CKLB, #13 on Pittsburgh's KDKA and Detroit's WKNR, #14 on Pittsburgh's KQV and #17 on Chicago's WLS. Like "Lost In The Crowd", "Outside The Gates" reflected Twyla's sadness over the death of former boyfriend Jack Mansfield.

"You May Be Holding My Baby" (written by NYC Bitter End Club owner Paul Colby) finally saw light on 'Lou Christie Strikes Back' (Co & Ce album 1231, Record World 26 March 1966) aka 'Lou Christie Strikes Again' (Roulette album SR-25332). See Lou Christie: 'The Complete Co & Ce / Roulette Recordings' (Taragon TARCD-1042, MOJO review May 1999).

Weslu Productions, Inc.

In spring 1964, Lou Christie and Wes Farrell (Wesley Fogel, d. 29 February 1996) formed Weslu Productions, Inc, 1650 Broadway, corner of 51st Street, New York City. Wes Farrell wrote "Hang On Sloopy" (registered 12 February 1964 as "My Girl Sloopy") with "Outside The Gates Of Heaven" producer Bertrand Russell Berns (d. 30 December 1967).

Drawn by the prospect of Motion Pictures and / or TV, Lou Christie signed to Colpix Records in May 1964. His contact: Columbia Pictures / Screen Gems Vice-President Don Kirshner.

In June 1964, Lou Christie and The Tammys connected with ace arranger Charles Calello and cut "Guitars And Bongos" / "Merry-Go-Round" (Colpix single CP-735, Billboard review 1 August 1964, #123, Variety review 12 August 1964, WCRO Johnstown, PA #49 of 1964), "Make Summer Last Forever" and "Back Track" at Stea-Phillips, Hotel Victoria, 781 Seventh Avenue in NYC.

Variety: 'Lou Christie's "Guitars And Bongos" (Weslu, BMI) registers as a swinging entry with a hard-rocking sound aimed right at the teen market'.

Billboard: 'Lou's switch to Colpix may well bring him a hit right off. Plenty of sound excitement on this side. High-pitched chorus and driving beat'.

A summer hit in the Southern Hemisphere, "Guitars And Bongos" peaked at #18 on 2SM Sydney, Australia the week beginning 18 December 1964. Mysteriously, the Mono single version of "Guitars And Bongos" ('Hey, let's start dancin' to the...') differed from the three alternate-mix Stereo album versions ('We're gonna start dancin' to the...').

Nearly two years after the American release, "Merry-Go-Round" attained 'A' side status in the UK (Colpix single PX 735, NME ad 1 April 1966).

NME 8 April 1966: 'A typical West Coast surf-flecked shuffler, which sets an insistent fast-medium pace. It's a swinging rhythm, and the drummer's in great form – but it's difficult to comment on Lou, because he's almost drowned out by over-spirited chanting by a backing (or should it be fronting) group'.

Lou promoted "Merry-Go-Round" and the Colpix album during a quick British tour. 'Now Christie The Hitmaker Strikes Twice', screamed the Liverpool Echo 9 April 1966.

In March 1966, Mick Jagger told GO Magazine, 'During the next four months, Britain will be playing host to Lou Christie, The Righteous Brothers and Sugar Pie DeSanto. Now these great people will score and score big. Lou Christie won't just be a success because of "Lightnin' Strikes", but because he's a personality. And that personality shines through on the records and in his act'.

Supercharged with lush vocal textures and rich visual imagery, "Make Summer Last Forever" allowed The Tammys to sparkle with breathtaking brilliance. 'Never ending No ending', they insisted.

Following Ritchie & The Runarounds' "Don'tcha Backtrack" and the Colpix "Back Track", Lou issued "(Baby, I Wanna) Back Track" on the 'Painter Of Hits' album (MGM). Shirley Ellis covered the MGM "Back Track" (which borrowed lyrics from "Outside The Gates Of Heaven") on Columbia album CS 9479, Cash Box 10 June 1967.

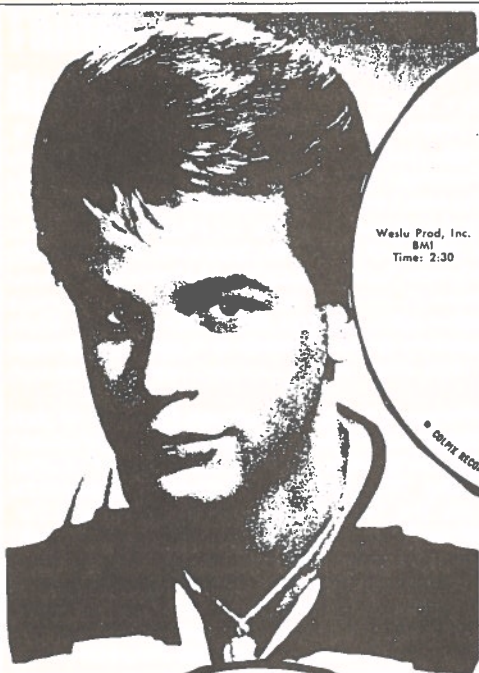
In October 1964, Lou Christie and The Tammys cut "Have I Sinned" / "Pot Of Gold" (Colpix single CP-753, Billboard 31 October 1964; WCRO Johnstown, PA #23 of 1964) and "Too Many Miles" with arranger Charles Calello.

Billboard on "Have I Sinned": 'Highly distinctive sound and arrangement. High register vocal coupled with great dance beat and effective teen lyrics. The little gals should go out of their skulls with this offering'.

"Have I Sinned" opened with Lou asking the rhetorical question while The Tammys provided a thrilling trumpet fanfare. Painting a vivid backdrop for Lou's falsetto fireworks, the girls kicked the song into overdrive with 'Shang Shang Du Langs'.

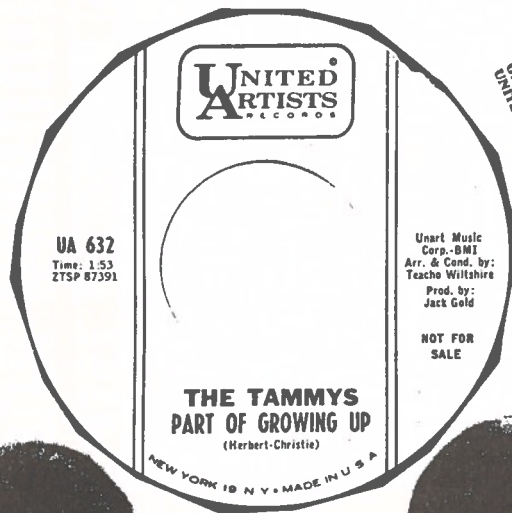
"Pot Of Gold", a romantic delight orchestrated in tones of deep Gold and an unimaginably rich purple, quoted The Classics' 1960 recording "Tomorrow Will Come" (Alcar single 208 B, released 1963).

And the electrifying "Too Many Miles" ('Lou Christie Strikes Again', Colpix album SCP-4001, Record World 19 February 1966), even featured the artistry of future "Lightnin' Strikes" guitarist Ralph Casale.

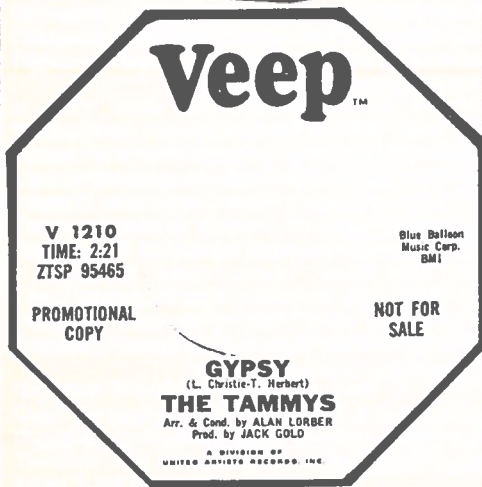


NEW RECORDS!
"TAKE BACK YOUR RING"
 By The Tammys

OIL CITY'S OWN KATHY and GRETCHEEN OWENS and LINDA JONES



THE TAMMYS "Take Your Ring"
 KATHY, GRETCHEEN, LINDA
 OWENS, OWENS, JONES
 UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS



Linda

The Tammys
 FEMALE VOCAL TRIO



Cathy



Gretchen

Charles Calello later produced and arranged Lou Christie's 'Lightnin' Strikes' (MGM album E / SE 4360, Billboard 19 February 1966, Cash Box #58), 'Painter Of Hits' and 'Shake Hands And Walk Away Cryin'' (Columbia single 4-44062, Billboard 18 March 1967, #95, WVOK Birmingham, AL #5, backgrounds by Linda Jones, Amy Sacco and Kay Chick).

From 13 November to 6 December 1964, the Dick Clark Caravan of Stars included Lou Christie, The Supremes, Brian Hyland, Johnny Tillotson, The Crystals and Dee Dee Sharp. During the tour, Lou became very close to **Diana Ross** (see 'She Sold Me Magic', UK Buddah single 201073, January 1970, NME #24, Japan #7, Certified Gold, covered by Elton John on RPM CD 142, October 1994).



**Lou Christie and Diana Ross,
November 1964**

PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRY YOUNG

Tammy's Will Be At St. Greg's Thanksgiving Dance on November 27

But in early December 1964, the US Army (Reserves) drafted Lou Christie. He even had to miss the final shows of the Dick Clark tour at Chattanooga, Tennessee's Memorial Auditorium (3:30 and 8:00PM).

As Lou Christie endured Basic Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky, Amy Sacco supervised The Tammys' NYC recording session 11 December 1964: "Hold Back The Light Of Dawn" / "Gypsy" (Unreleased United Artists single UA 819, February 1965, Veep single V 1210, Masters ZTSP 95464 / 95465, Monarch Pressing Delta Numbers 55616 / 55616X, Billboard review 27 March 1965).

Billboard on "Hold Back The Light Of Dawn": 'Powerful production ballad with driving rhythm backing and strong vocal work. Well produced by Jack Gold with all the sounds of a smash hit. Flip: "Gypsy" (Red Balloon, BMI)'.

New York City's WABC All American Survey for the week ending 3 April 1965 listed "Hold Back The Light Of Dawn" as a Big Bonus track. Composers Ernest Maresca ("Runaround Sue", "The Wanderer") and Louis John Zeratao ("Party Girl", "Hey Dean, Hey Jean") had registered "Hold Back The Light Of Dawn" with the Library Of Congress on 18 November 1964. United Artists' *Blue Balloon Music* registered the prophetic Christie-Herbert power ballad "Gypsy" on 15 March 1965.

The 11 December 1964 Tammys' session also yielded "Blue Sixteen" / "His Actions Speak Louder Than Words" (Unreleased Veep single V 1220, June 1965).

'The Tuneful Tammys Of Oil City' graced the cover of the Sunday, 14 February 1965, Tri-City Times-News Foto Feature Magazine. Inside, amid photos of Gretchen cooking and Cathy and Linda dancing "The Jerk", Fran Fry's two page article asked, 'What are The Tammys really like? Starting with the leader, Gretchen is an extremely sincere person and has such likes as gypsies, individualists and makeup. Her hobbies include writing stories and horoscopes for fun. Her dislikes are narrow-minded people and poverty. Her sister, Cathy, is totally different. She likes New York City, clothes and "classy people". Her hobbies include hairdressing and dancing. Her dislikes are phonies, Chinese food and prejudice. The youngest member of the trio is Linda Jones. She favors cats, Italian food and dancing. She is quick to admit she does not like school or "two-faced people". Linda claims horseback riding and sewing as her hobbies'.

While Lou languished in the Army, Colpix released two singles, deviously burying the Christie-Herbert / Tammys' tunes on 'B' sides: "Why Did You Do It Baby" / "Make Summer Last Forever" (Colpix single CP-770, Billboard ad 3 April 1965) and "A Teenager In Love" / "Back Track" (Colpix single CP-778, Billboard 5 June 1965).

During the late Colpix (pre-MGM) period, Lou Christie traveled on Dick Clark's Hitsville '65 tour with close friend Louise Harrison Caldwell, sister of Beatle George Harrison. Also on the bus: The Trade Winds, Reparata And The Delrons, Round Robin and Gene Jones And The Impacts.

Today Gretchen Owens Wagner is a member of The Notre Dame Folk Group. The Group has released two albums, 'For The Glory Of God' (NDGD01, 1998) and 'Sing! A Jubilee Of Praise' (NDGD02, 2000). As Gretchen told the Herald in March 2001, 'I'm surrounded by music. I still have the same energy and passion. It's just channeled in a different way'.

Performing more than 100 live dates a year, Lou Christie continues to show exciting new "Faces". His #12 Adult Contemporary hit "Beyond The Blue Horizon" appeared in the films 'Rain Man' ('Original Motion Picture Soundtrack', Capitol 91866, Billboard 4 March 1989, #31), 'Dutch' and 'A Home Of Our Own'. Lou Christie songs were also featured in the movies 'Strange Behavior', 'Wild Palms', 'Mondo Trasho', 'Barcelona', 'Before Sunrise', 'Waiting For Guffman', 'Nick And Jane' and 'The Last Days Of Disco'. Lou's 'Pledging My Love' (Varese Vintage CD VSD-5839) tied Bob Dylan's 'Time Out Of Mind' as Billboard's Most Impressive Comeback of 1997.

Lou Christie was featured in Roctober issues 15 and 25. He also appeared on Chic-A-Go-Go's landmark 100th show (see Chic-A-Go-Go Video Volume 26)!

Tammys' Facts To Know And Trade:

In high school, Gretchen and Cathy participated in a group identified as The Impressions. Billed as The Charnelles, Gretchen, Cathy and Linda first publicly performed Saturday 31 March 1962 at the First Annual Spring Talent Show at the Pleasantville, PA High School Gym. Singing "The Glory Of Love" and the self-penned "Cathy, Baby", the girls competed against an imposing field that boasted Rowenna Finebrook (vocal solo) and Sandra Nicewonger (pantomime). In a cruel twist of fate, The Charnelles lost to Youngsville, PA's Gyantwachia Indian Dancers.

Early on, the girls were thrown out of Famores' Restaurant in Oil City for singing along with the jukebox. 'We'll be on that jukebox someday', they vowed—and the promise came true with "Take Back Your Ring".

Christie-Herbert songs intended for The Tammys: "Cheaters Never Win" (Watch out boys, bad news travels fast), "Silver Leaves", "It's Snowing", "I Get The Message" and "Jimmy's Puppet".

Most Tammys' tunes were pure three-part harmony. Linda Jones sang lead on "Take Back Your Ring" and did the spoken line in "What's So Sweet About Sweet Sixteen". Cathy Owens sang lead on "Part Of Growing Up", a tune partly derived from Lou Sacco's 1961 composition "Shim La La".

The Tammys made many live appearances in Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York, sometimes backed by the Johnny Jack Quintet. Over the years, Lou Christie had many connections with Ricky / Gone artist Johnny Jack (John A. Greco, d. 23 May 1997). Lou sang backup on Johnny Jack's "Need You" (Ricky single R-212, Billboard 14 April 1962) and the Johnny Jack-penned "Dancin' Place" by Betty Barnes (Bodway single R-216, Billboard 18 August 1962).

The Tammys rocked the Lighthouse Club in New York City, Joey Reynolds' TV show in Buffalo, NY, the Pin-Up Lounge and Red Rooster Teen Age Night Club in Pittsburgh, the Twi Lite Lounge in McKees Rocks, PA, the Elks Club in Franklin, PA, the Seneca, PA Fire Hall, the Venango, PA Campus, the Arbeiters Club in Erie, PA, the Dutch Pantry in Erie, St. Gregory's High School Thanksgiving Dance (Northeast PA, 27 November 1964) as well as other appearances in Cleveland, Ohio and Pittsburgh, Butler, Clarion, Greenville and Sharon, PA.

In early 1965, Gretchen worked as a secretary for a Pennsylvania demolition team. The crew chief lived in Cleveland. After lip-synching "Hold Back The Light Of Dawn" for Cleveland's 'Upbeat', The Tammys hurried to the crew chief's home to watch the broadcast on TV. In summer 1965, The Tammys played St. Eulalia's Parish Centre in Coudersport, PA, spending the night in the Nuns' convent.

The Tammys' "Part Of Growing Up" appeared on Richard Julio's Girl Group compilation 'Gems Volume II; Twenty Original Songs Of Teenage Romance' (Portland, Maine, 1982).

"Egyptian Shumba" surfaced on 'Land Of 1,000 Dunces; Bug Out Volume 3' (Telstar-Candy CD and LP 007, June 1994). Compiler Todd Abramson enthused, 'Genius thy name is Tammys! This sarcophagus stomper couldn't have been any wilder if Joe Meek produced it'.

The Rubinoos / Psychotic Pineapple offshoot band Vox Pop was almost named "The Shumbas". Tommy Dunbar: 'The first time I heard that song I completely flipped. It's gotta be one of the wildest things I've ever heard on record'.

The Tammys' "Egyptian Shumba" reverberated over the closing credits of 'Return Of The Pharaohs' (Gonef G-5758), a video record of The Goblins' 24 October 1999 concert at Chicago's Oriental Institute. According to The Goblins' Phantom Creeper, "Egyptian Shumba" is easily the greatest pop song ever written about ancient Egypt. It sounds like a record that might have been made if Phil Spector had swapped brains with Sun Ra for a session'.

The testimonials are justified. "Egyptian Shumba" is a mesmerizing monument of mythic proportions. The energy! The urgency! The pulsating primordial pounding! "Egyptian Shumba" begins with an insane cobra clarinet leaping and licking. Then The Tammys chant, 'Shimmy Shimmy Shimmy Shy-Yi Meece-E-Deece. Last night I dreamed I was on the Nile...'

LOU CHRISTIE OFFICIAL FAN CLUB

PO Box 748, Chicago, IL 60690-0748

eMail: egshum @ hotmail.com

http: // www. geocities.com / SunsetStrip / Palladium / 9229 / christie.htm



Lou Christie & The Tammys

Egyptian Shumba:

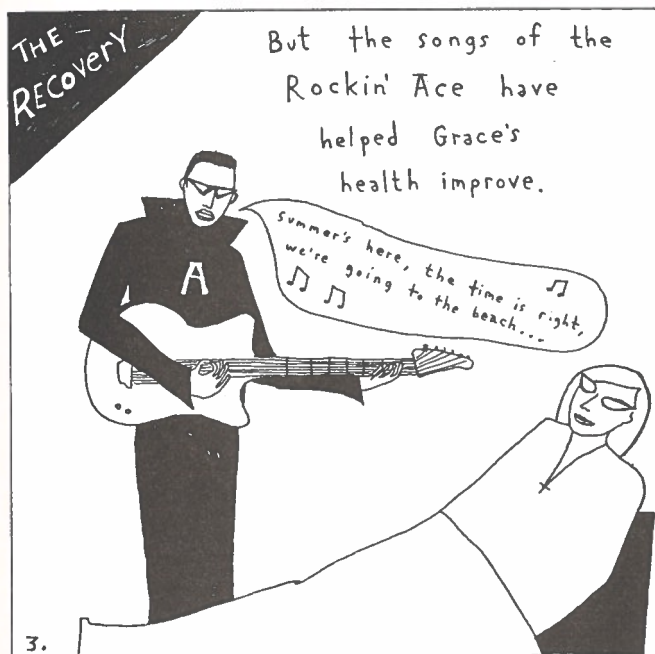
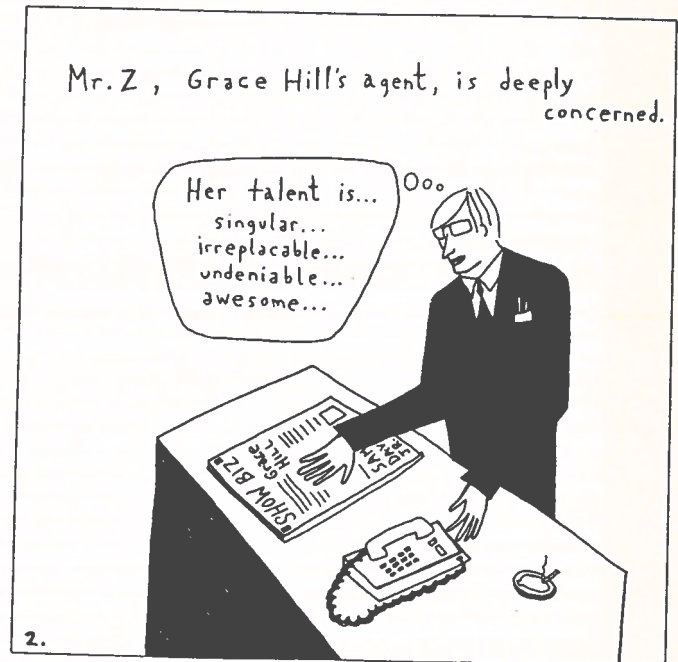
The Singles And Rare Recordings 1962-1964
(RPM CD 330)

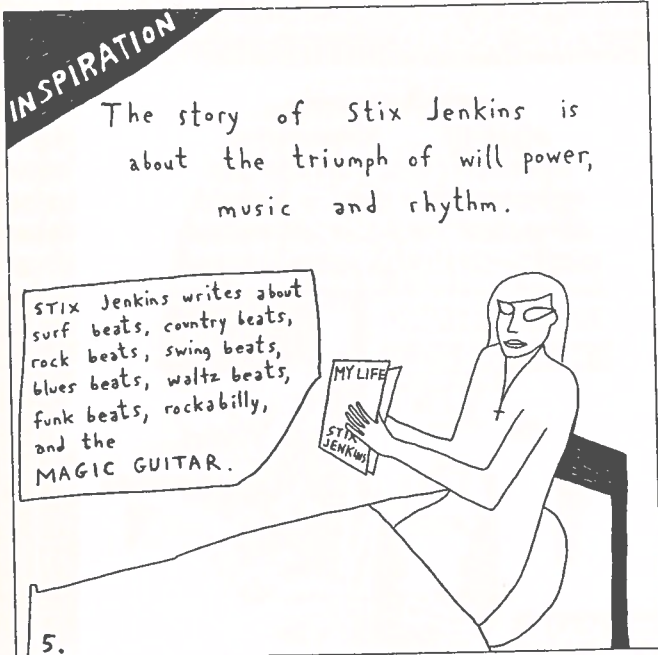
All Tracks Written by LOU CHRISTIE and TWYLA HERBERT
except #s 17 and 19 – 21

All Tracks feature THE TAMMYS except #s 01 – 03

LOU CHRISTIE: 01. THE GYPSY CRIED, 02. TWO FACES HAVE I, 03. SUMMER SNOW, 04. OUTSIDE THE GATES OF HEAVEN, 05. GUITARS AND BONGOS, 06. MERRY-GO-ROUND, 07. MAKE SUMMER LAST FOREVER, 08. BACK TRACK, 09. HAVE I SINNED, 10. POT OF GOLD, 11. TOO MANY MILES **THE TAMMYS:** 12. PART OF GROWING UP, 13. TAKE BACK YOUR RING **ITCHIE & THE RUNAROUNDS:** 14. DON'TCHA BACKTRACK, 15. LOST IN THE CROWD **THE TAMMYS:** 16. EGYPTIAN SHUMBA, 17. WHAT'S SO SWEET ABOUT SWEET SIXTEEN, 18. GYPSY, 19. HOLD BACK THE LIGHT OF DAWN, 20. BLUE SIXTEEN (Previously Unreleased), 21. HIS ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS (Previously Unreleased), 22. EGYPTIAN SHUMBA (Previously Unreleased version)

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO COMPILATION MAN SUPREME
BOB HYDE (d. 13 July 2001)





KISS is ... Alive!

I'M LATE FOR WORK...



THEN, JUST AS I'M
ALMOST READY TO HIT
THE ROAD



Searleman

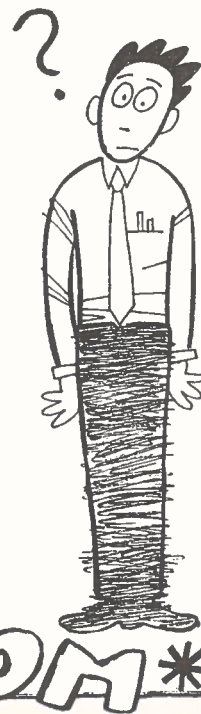
© 1993

IT HAPPENS



* BASS SOLO IN "SHE"

THAT OLD
GENE SIMMONS
THING



GOOD RATS: continued from P. 8

know." "Great American Music Halls," "Audience" and "Rock and Roll Point of View" are all sublimely rock *about* rock (*Village Voice* once derisively said that Peppi's most moving works deal "with his anger that nobody's buying his records").

Of course the band was still playing out constantly, but the chemistry wasn't there. Kulick's heart wasn't in it (he later complained he felt like a hired hand with little creative input, a role he played without complaints, but with a lot more compensation, with KISS) and the band took it's biggest blow when Mickey decided he had enough. A parade of local up-and-comers filled in, including George Tevitt and Randy Colvin. But things weren't really working out.

And here is where the story takes an interesting "Twist." The early 80s saw one of the Good Rats' contemporaries, Twisted Sister, get a chance after a decade of toiling the same Tri-State bar circuit. They became multi platinum sellers, partially with the help of Peppi's obnoxious influence on Dee, and it was time for the bands to help each other out again. The Good Rats came to Twisted's rescue by providing a new drummer, former Good Rat Joe Franco. Twisted's helping hand to Peppi would be much more

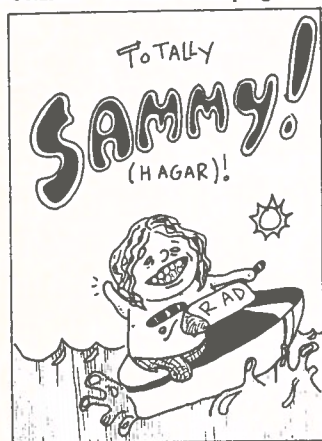
profound.

Record exec Jason Flom championed Twisted Sister and became influential at Atlantic for it (he's riding high again today with Lava Records and Kid Rock). Jason asked Twisted Sister, if they knew anybody that wrote great songs, and Twisted recommended Peppi. Jason loved what he heard and Peppi remarkably ended up getting his own solo record deal without auditioning on the strength of the songs.

Peppi hit the studio recording his album and also was put to work writing and producing Atlantic's recent signing, light-Metal chick Fiona's debut album *Fiona* (Atlantic 81242-1, 1985). Interesting side note: Fiona must have had a rodent fetish because her next producer was Ratt's Beau Hill. Peppi also went Hollywood as a track he worked on with Fiona appeared in the film and soundtrack LP for the 1984 Demi Moore vehicle "No Small Affair"

After the Fiona record was released to moderate success Atlantic president Doug Morris took Peppi in his office and praised his work, played him some unreleased tracks by new signing Julian Lennon (dating Fiona at the time) and acted like Peppi had the keys to the castle.

Continued on page101



HAM DAVIS '00



ROCK IS FUNNY

by Dan Buck

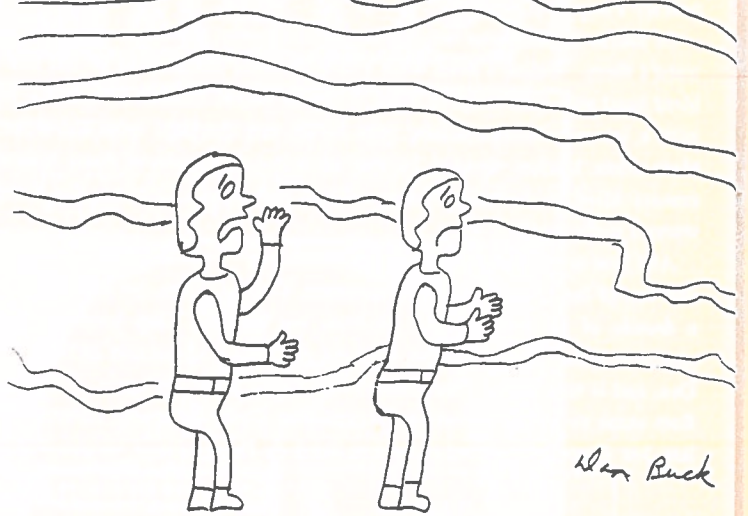


What Is That
You're Listening To?



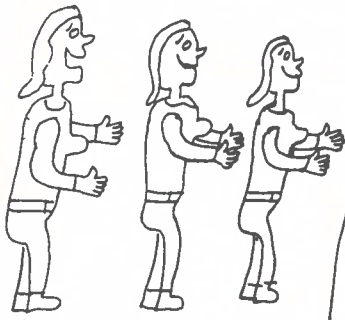
Dan Buck

The Best Of
Body Noises, Part II.



Dan Buck

It's Not The Music.
It's The Smoke That's
Making You Cry.



Dan Buck

He's Got A Voice
Only Mothers Love.



What 'Cha Listening
To?



Dan Buck

Someone Else
Think.

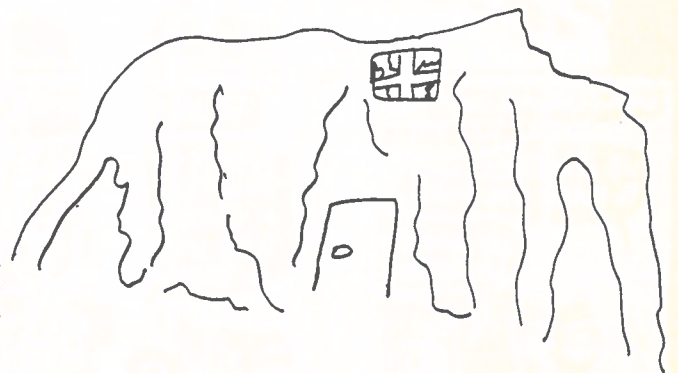
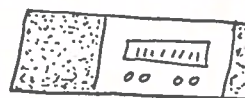


What Are These
Pills For?



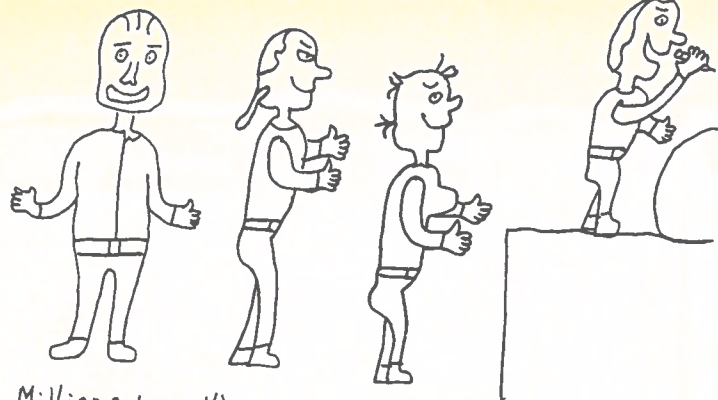
Dan Buck

For What Music
Ails You.

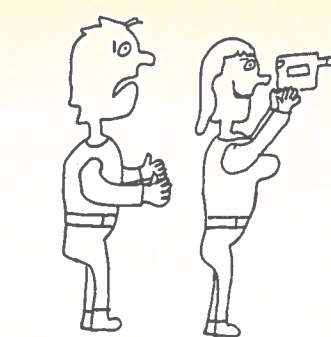


Dan Buck

It Was Real Foot Stomping
Music.



Millions Love Him,
For What He Can't
Become.



You Can Tell He's A
Star, Because He's
Too High To Ever
Come Down.



A=



Why Do They
Call It Rock?

Because
Protestors
Don't Throw
Pebbles.



Whatever Happened
To All That
Free Love?
They Started
Taxing It.



How'd He Get
To Be So Good?



He Bought A
How To How Not To
Book.



I Keep Searching
For The Right Key.



Me Too. So I Can
Lock My Ears...



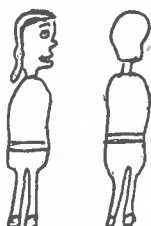
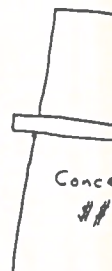
How's He
Keep So
Cool?
He Gets The
Fans Going.



These Concerts
Get To Me.

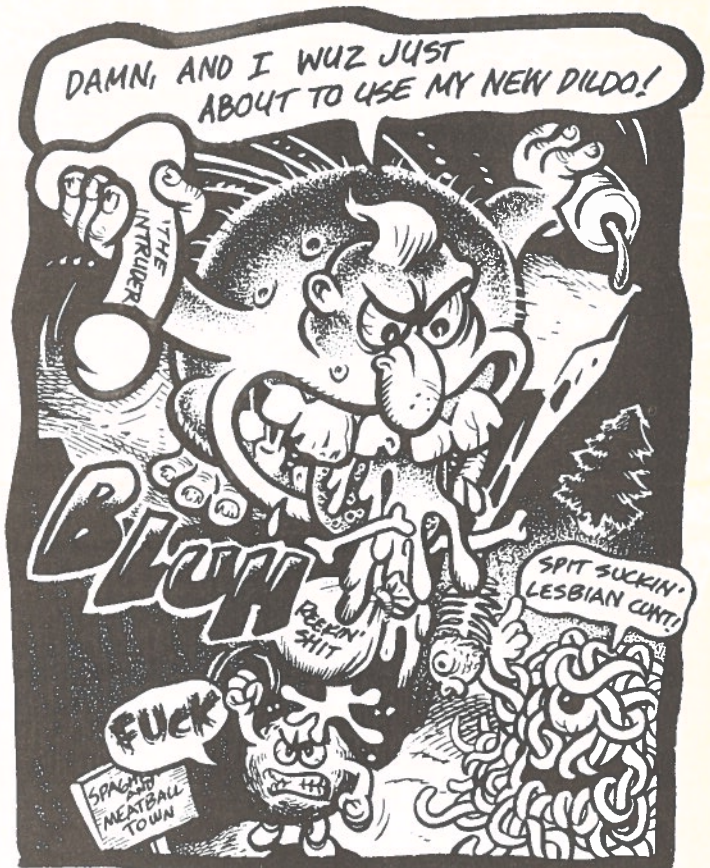


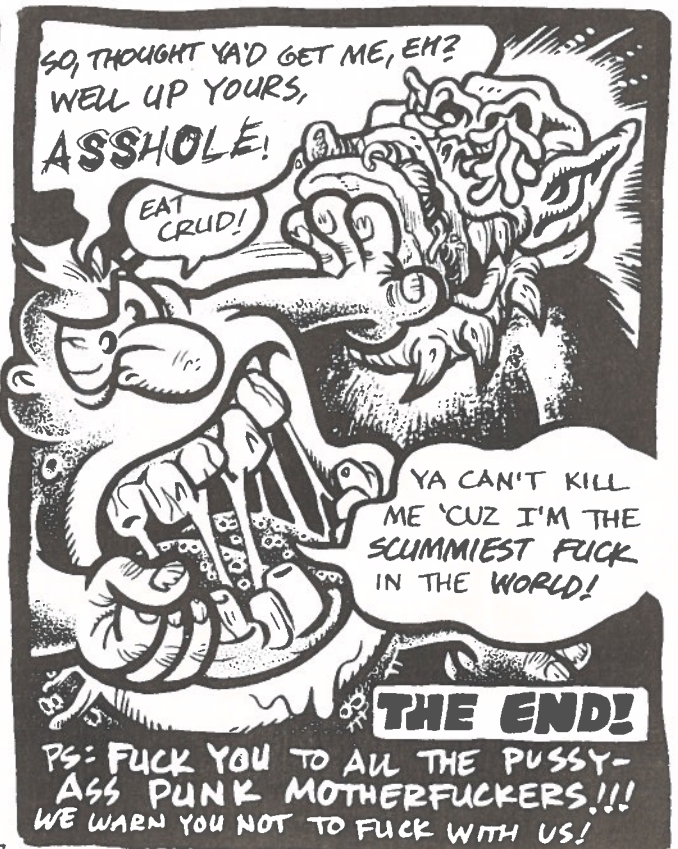
Me Too! Right
Through My
Pocket book.



WHEN YOU MENTIONED GIVING ME
A WEDDING BAND, I THOUGHT IT
WOULD BE FOR MY FINGER.

He Always Gets
A Big Hand From The
Audience.





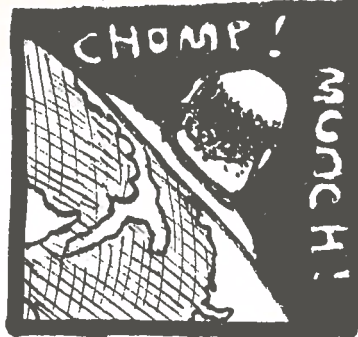
BOWL WOES BUZZSAW.



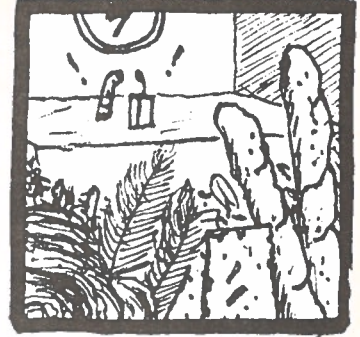
SCORNING THE DOMESTIC TABLE, OPULO FLED FROM ARCHES AND CLOWNS.



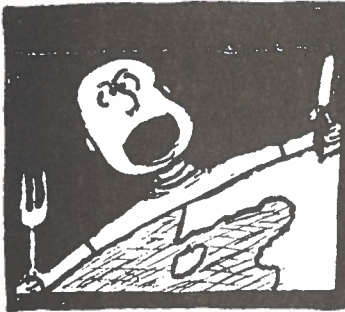
HE SOUGHT ONLY COPIOUS AMOUNTS OF ETHNIC FARE IN AN INSOUCIANT MANNER.



SOON BENGAL WAS BEREFT OF SUSTAINANCE AND ROMA LEFT LIKEWISE.



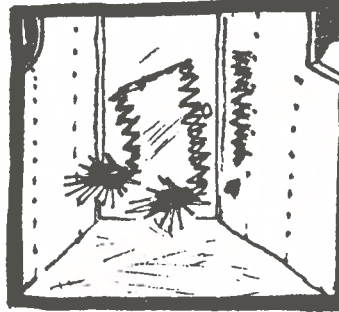
CROPS MET IN CONGRESS AND PRODUCE SAT IN PARLIMENTS, NEAR AND FAR AGREEING ON ACTION.



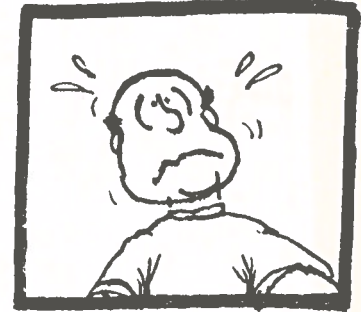
HEEDLESS, OPULO CONTINUED UPON HIS COURSE OF GLUTTONY.



AT LENGTH THE CALL OF NATURE BEFELL HIM AND TO THE FACILITIES HE REPAIRED.



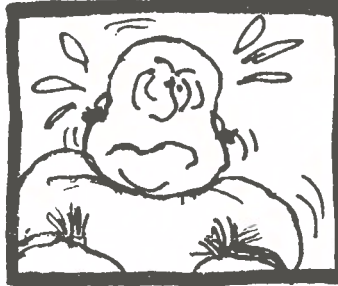
FROM HIS RUMPHOLE ONLY ISSUED DUNGLY SOUNDS OF LOUSILY PLAYED SITARS.



FRANTIC AND BLOATED, HE TRIED AGAIN.



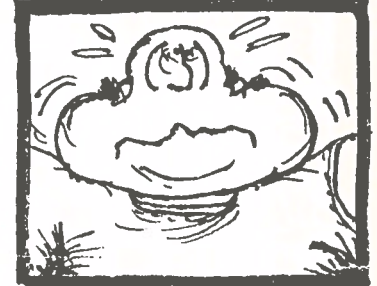
OPULO NOW ONLY ISSUED FETID TONES OF WRETCHEDLY PLAYED SAMI-SENS.



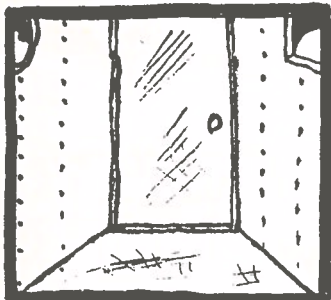
SWELLING IN HORROR AND OFFAL, OPULO RENEWED THE ATTEMPT.



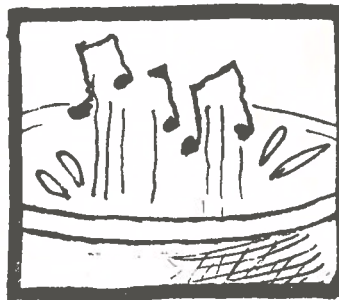
FECULENT NOTES OF A TERRIBLE AND FOUL GLOCKENSPIEL ONLY FLOWED FORTH.



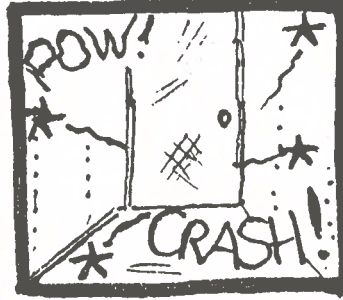
AT THE NADIR OF HIS BODILY FORTUNES, HE VENTURED AGAIN.



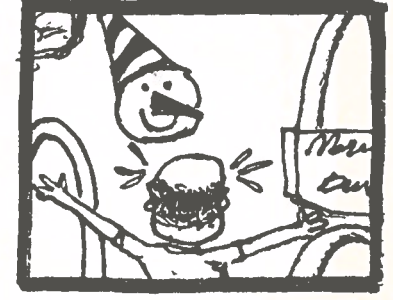
SUCCESS!



SUDDENLY, FECAL NOTES ROSE UP FROM THE BOWL.

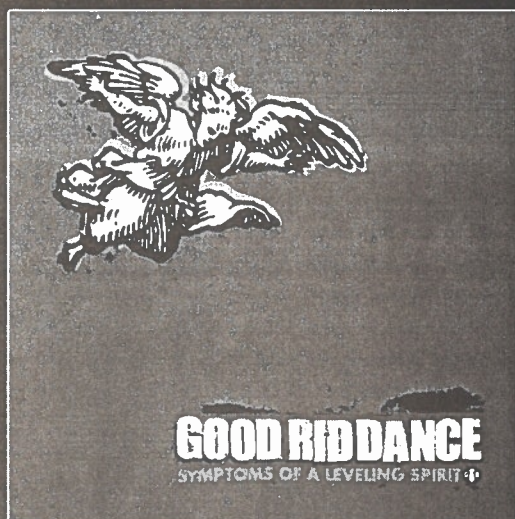


THEY CHASTISED HIM FOR HIS GASTRONOMIC DISLOYALTY TO AMERICA.

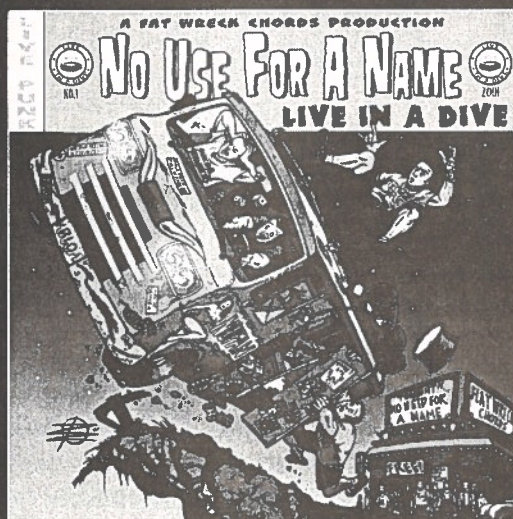


FEELING SHITTY, OPULO AGAIN FLED TO ARCHES AND A CLOWN'S EMBRACE.

WE WILL SQUASH YOU LIKE ANTS!



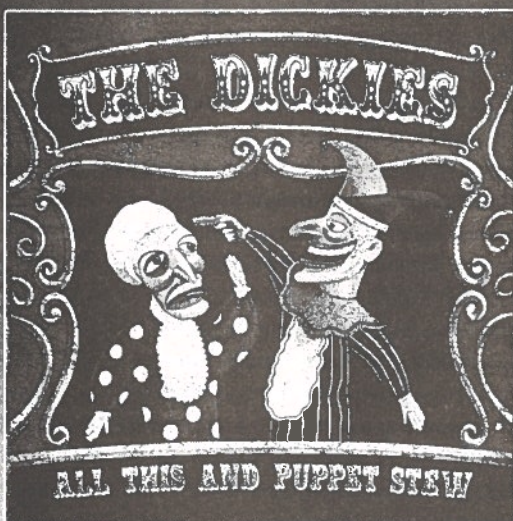
GOOD RIDDANCE
"SYMPTOMS OF A LEVELING SPIRIT" CD/LP



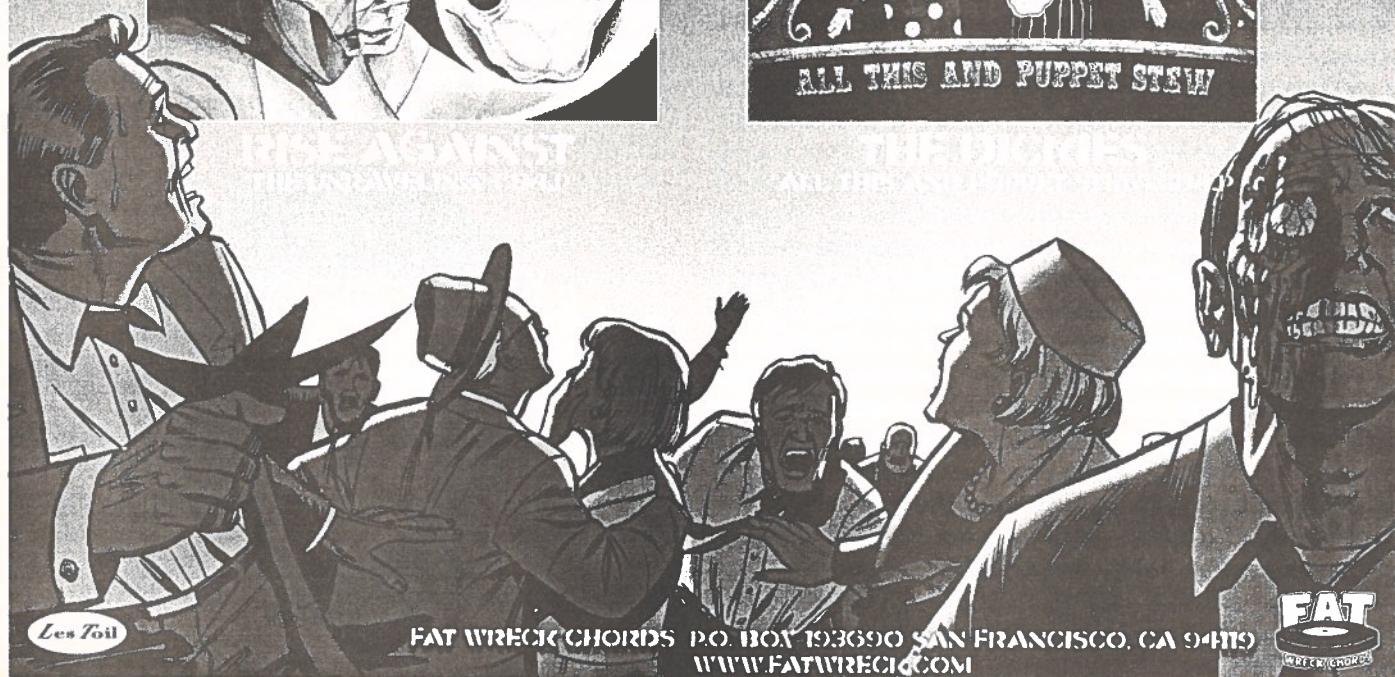
NO USE FOR A NAME
"LIVE IN A DIVE" CD/LP



RISE AGAINST
"THE UNRAVELING" CD/LP



THE DICKIES
"ALL THIS AND PUPPET STEW" CD/LP



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"Out of the Shadows" The Return of *Linda Gail Lewis*

By Ken Burke

Even if she weren't Jerry Lee Lewis's youngest sister, this writer would dig speaking with Linda Gail Lewis. Most celebrities know ahead of time what they're going to say and seldom vary from their agenda. Not Linda Gail, who speaks from the heart, talks openly about her life, gives blunt opinions, and is funny as all get out.

Born in Ferriday, Louisiana, Lewis began recording and touring with Jerry Lee in 1963. During her brother's re-emergence as a great country artist on Smash and Mercury records, Linda Gail proved a valuable partner, cutting hit duets ("Don't Let Me Cross Over," "Roll Over Beethoven") and writing many fine LP tracks. On her own, she scored a Top 40 country record ("Smile, Somebody Loves You") that won an ASCAP airplay Award.

Though blessed with a sunnier disposition than "The Killer," Linda Gail has lived a life every bit as soul wracking. Married eight times, addicted to prescription drugs, and just plain worn out by hectic non-stop touring, she quit the business in late 1975. Returning as a solo artist in 1987, she surprised fans by pumping the piano in her famed brother's style.

Overseas, where fans have never tired of Jerry Lee's sound, Linda Gail quickly became a popular attraction on the rock'n'roll revival circuit. Yet in the States, she remained a small time club act, and recordings for New Rose, Icehouse, and Sire did little for her career.

Linda Gail's 1998 autobiography *The Devil, me, and Jerry Lee* alerted the faithful that she was still around and sassy as ever. However, it was last year's highly regarded collaboration with Van Morrison, *You Win Again*, that alerted roots music fans to her vibrant, sexy power as a performer.

Despite her family name and newfound musical reputation, most Americans know about Linda Gail Lewis due to her tenuous connection with the Robert Blake - Bonny Lee Bakely story. During the height of the media's fascination with the controversial murder, Lewis was seen on dozens of news programs talking about her late friend, Bakely.

Now that the Chandra Levy disappearance has supplanted the Blake-Bakely murder mystery in the public's mind, Lewis can concentrate on music. At press time, *Out Of The Shadows*, her first solo American album in five years is being readied for release.

From her home in Big Sandy, Tennessee, Lewis spoke freely about her ill-fated relationship with Van Morrison, strange friendship with Bonny Lee Bakely, the new album, and the one and only Jerry Lee Lewis.

Linda Gail Lewis: Have I talked to you since I did that gig with [her brother Jerry Lee Lewis] in France?

Ken Burke: Not about the gig. When did it take place?

LGL: Last August. It was wonderful. It was the Miranda Country Festival. I was the headliner on Saturday night and Jerry was the headliner on Sunday night. It was so cool. He was playing Brussels on Saturday with Chuck Berry and Little Richard. But then he wasn't doing anything with them on Sunday so they had hired him to headline this festival. The promoters thought that Jerry might do a duet with me. So, they paid my expenses, my hotel room and stuff, to stay and be there when he played on the Sunday night.

KB: Good thinking, how'd it go?

Oh, it was wonderful. We sat backstage for about two hours and drank French Champagne. I made a toast and said, "Let's drink a toast to how wonderful it is for me to be here with you and drinking this champagne." He said, "Let me make the toast and let me say that I hope it won't be this long before we do this again." He was so sweet to me. We had so much fun, he was so cute and he said, "Now Linda, I've heard all about how good you're playing the piano. I just want to tell you that you're good enough, you can stop now." (Laughs.)

Did he introduce you or bring you onstage?

No, he didn't even mention my name. But I tell you; he did the most wonderful gig. Ken it was so great, but this is kind of scary. When I played on the Saturday night, it was raining. I had 10,000 people who stood out in the pouring rain to watch me, which I thought was just so sweet. All this is on video. After I played, an hour later it all came crashing down. If Annie, my daughter and I had still been out there, we'd probably be dead now. But the poles in the soft ground just gave, so all the lighting and stuff crashed down on the stage. So, the next night, they had to do it with the lights on poles, and they had no top. But the weather cleared up and it was beautiful and there was this big, bright full moon, and the promoter was just having a breakdown, he came to me and said, "Oh my God, what are we going to do? Jerry Lee Lewis is going to be here and he's not going to want to go on because there's no top on the stage." I said, "If you don't tell him there's no top on the stage, he'll never notice it. He won't even bother to look." And you know what? He never said a word about it. When he went on I stood backstage with my niece Phoebe and my daughter Annie and we watched the gig. Ken, when he started doing "C.C. Rider" and he had this beautiful long black grand piano - he's started playing a real piano again - and he's singing "C.C. Rider" and he says "That ol' moon is shining bright." I look and I see Jerry Lee Lewis sitting at his piano and behind him is this huge full moon and I thought "What a moment!" Of course he didn't even see it. It was just magic moment for me and I enjoyed his show so much. Also, I saw his show the month before that in London. I saw him, Chuck Berry and Little Richard at the arena that July.





Those are European-only tours, so maybe you can tell us, who sounds best of those three rock'n'roll pioneers?

Well, Jerry's voice is the clearest and the best. Little Richard still displays an unbelievable amount of energy even though they have to help him when he climbs on top of the piano. I'd say that Little Richard has the energy, Jerry Lee Lewis has the voice, and Chuck Berry – his voice is not what it used to be and he has no energy really. But they're all so great, they're legends, and it's just so wonderful to be able to see them. But of course, I'm a Jerry Lee Lewis fan so to me, Jerry Lee Lewis is the best of the three. He's genius on the piano and his voice is as good as it ever was.

Your album and tour with Van Morrison and interviews concerning Bonny Lee Bakely has made you highly visible. What's it like to carry on a career amid all this controversy?

It was so wild when I got home, because I came over to do a recording session in Austin. So when I got here, it was just horrible. A friend of mine [Bonny Lee Bakely] was shot and so I started getting a lot of calls from media people. My publicist is such a crazy guy and he would not let me turn down any interviews. The *Inside Edition* people came to my house and I had to do the session the very next day and they kept me up until three o'clock in the morning. Then "Dateline" was set up at the studio in Austin when I got there! All these cameras and lights were set up everywhere. It was so bizarre.

Did you get to do any recording?

We did the session down there and it turned out great, but then we had to come back to Nashville to mix it and do a few overdubs. We wanted to use the Jordanaires [Elvis Presley's former back-up singers] on three songs and then we wanted to put Charlie McCoy's harmonica on a few things. Then we got Jim Horn who has done a lot of work with the Memphis Horns and a lot of other people – he's really good. The new stuff I've written is just so influenced by Van [Morrison] that it was just crying out for horns. But I'm still a country girl. So what you've got are these great horns, and this r&b music, with a country voice. It's the most different thing you've heard in your life and I didn't want to copy Van so I never said to the producer "We need horns on this stuff."

You had horns on "Sensuous Woman" [one of her better solo records from the 70s], didn't you?

Maybe. Charlie Chalmers was the producer of that, and Charlie also played saxophone with the Memphis Horns. So Charlie would probably never do a session without horns. But I guess those are the only horns I've ever had,

except for the fake horns on "I'd Rather Stay Home And Rock'n'Roll." [From her *Icehouse* album. 1996.] (Laughs.) Jerry Phillips was too cheap to use real horns, but thank God I've got producers now who use the real thing. This is the wildest thing, because you'll be listening to one of these songs and you'll hear the horns come in and it'll take you back to Memphis. Then all of a sudden you'll hear a Dobro, then on one of the songs you'll hear the horns, the [Hammond] B-3, and then you'll hear a fiddle. It works though, it doesn't sound like it would, but it does.

Tell us something about this new label you're going to be on.

Well, I don't know for sure how they're going to do it, because my friend, he's cosmetics guy who did a line for Prada and he's a cosmetic chemist. He manufactures shampoo and hand lotion for Estee Lauder. He was the person who did the very first line of cosmetics for Donna Karan in New York. So, he's in the bigtime in that business and he's been my manager for about three years.

Is that Mark Potter?

That's right, Mark Potter. So Mark says, "We'll just have our own label because we have to market you." Everybody wrote so many nice things – well, not everybody, but 99% of the critics wrote really nice things about me when I did the album with Van Morrison. So people are more aware of me now and Mark said, "It would be horrible if you don't have your own album." That's when he decided that he would start his own label just to promote me. So really, the label's being done because of me and I'll be the first artist on it. It may be Lantassi slash something else, because there's a buzz going around about this project in Nashville and New York. Other labels are interested in this and Mark has already hired Webster & Associates in Nashville, they're already working it. In Nashville he's even hired a radio person and I said, "Well Mark, we don't have the product yet, darlin'." He said, "Well, it's better to go ahead and get them started." So, he's not pinching pennies here, he wants to do it right.

He has spent a lot of time and money on you, hasn't he?

Oh yeah – y'know Van said, "You must be sleeping with that guy." (Laughs.) I said, "Van, that is so ridiculous!" Because Mark is maybe thirty-five and he used to date my niece, Phoebe [Jerry Lee Lewis' oldest child]. That's how we got back together, I met Mark when he was a child, but then he was dating Phoebe and that's how we got back together again. Then Phoebe dumped him because he wanted to promote me instead of her.

Did Phoebe ever seriously want a career in music?

Oh yeah. She did an album in Nashville but I think she only did a limited pressing of it. Phoebe probably wouldn't go to the roots level, she would think that she's too good for that – she grew up in private school, and she probably wouldn't get involved in any roots kind of thing. To me, that's the most wonderful kind of music, because it's real. Everything else is just commercial bullshit, y'know. [Roots magazines] will give you a fair shake. They care about the music and so do I.

Not only that, but you're great copy because you're so open.

Well, I wanted to apologize to you because in one of our interviews I told you a little white lie. I don't normally ever lie in an interview, but I was in a situation with Van where I had to lie about our relationship. But now that it's over, I can tell the truth about it. But had I told you the truth before it would have been the end of my album project and the end of my gig.

You think Van Morrison would've gotten that angry?

Well, he such a private person – he thinks he has a right to privacy, but he doesn't, not really. None of us do in this business. It's stupid anyway – why in the world would you do something if you were ashamed of it? But, I'm not ashamed of anything I've done – I don't care. I will tell the truth if I have the controls that I can. Now, I'm in control of my life and career again. So now, I can say the truth and it's no problem.

Tell us about your tour with Van. Were you received well by Morrison's audience?

You know what, I was received *great* by Van's audience. His fans *loved* me. That's the reason we started having trouble - they loved me too much. It was just like on that Shakin' Stevens tour. [Done overseas in support on her 1999 Sire album.] It was same damned thing, but more complicated, because I was personally involved. What happened was, I started getting too much attention, especially in Los Angeles. Los Angeles was where I probably did the most damage. Jack Nicholson was there, and Bob Dylan was there, Tom Jones was there - all these people were there and I got really excited. When I got up for the rock'n'roll medley, instead of holding back a little bit like I had always done - to be courteous to Van because he's the star of the show. Instead of doing that, I just got up and kicked that piano stool all across that huge stage. (Laughs.) When I did, I just got into this rock'n'roll music to the point where the audience was mine and it was over! It was over and nobody cared that this man is a legend. Audiences don't care - they're cruel. So afterwards, he cussed me out. We were having some champagne back at the Chateau Marmont and he was just raving like a lunatic. He said, "All that audience wanted was you!" So, that was the beginning of the end.

You'd think that he would take some pride in rediscovering you.

Listen, he turned on me because of that. In our personal relationship he turned on me and professionally he turned on me. He cut the rock'n'roll medley from the gig right after the American tour was over. He started whittling away at it the second night in Chicago. He wouldn't let me stand-up and play or play with my feet or anything - he just cut the song off short to prevent me from really doing the show. He weakened a little bit in Boston. I saw a weak spot there so I was able to go ahead and do a really good gig there. Then, as soon as we got back to the U.K., he cut the rock'n'roll medley, all the rock'n'roll material, and our album tunes - everything out of the show. He might do like one or two album tunes a night. Then, when I gave him my notice, he started trying to add 'em back and stuff because he was torn. He loved me personally and he loved me professionally and he didn't really want me to leave, but, he still wanted to get back control of his show and have it be like it was before I came there - because the whole thing changed when I was there.

It's your natural instinct to put on a show, isn't it?

Oh yeah, but Van doesn't want that. He wants people to come because they want to hear his songs. Yet, he still has to compromise because he has to do "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Bright Side Of The Road" to really satisfy the audience. He hates that and fusses about it all the time. He says, "Every time I have to do 'Brown Eyed Girl' I feel I've lost it." I said, "Van, I don't understand that at all. Because Jerry Lee Lewis still loves to do 'Great Balls Of Fire' and 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On.'" He said, "You mean after all these years he actually *likes* doing those songs?" I said, "Van, he *LOVES* doing those songs." He told me just last summer when we were in France, "Linda I'll NEVER get tired of doing 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On' and 'Great Balls Of Fire!'" So Van - he's just fucked up in the head and he can't help it. He's more fucked up now that he's had a good dose of me. (Laughs.)

Does this type of publicity help or hurt an artist's career?

You know; the only thing that would hurt any of us right now would be if we were child molesters. It's the year 2001 and that's why I feel I can be honest about everything that's happened to me. I did an interview with a woman called Caroline Phillips, I think that was her name, and she writes for the *Mail On Sunday*. She's English but lives in LA and she came to Nashville to meet me. I just told her the absolute truth and it hasn't had any affect on me. But you know I'm fifty-three years old, I've had an affair. So what? I don't think people care anymore.

Working with Morrison led to an opportunity, didn't it?

I cannot tell you how much being with him helped me. I mean he brought something back into my life that I hadn't had, that maybe I never had. When you hear the songs that I wrote, you'll understand exactly what he brought to me and what I took away from that relationship. Not just on a personal level,

we're talking about the music too. Just by analyzing his songs, which I had to do. I had to learn 'em because you know I don't do anything by note or chart. I play by ear and I had to learn over a hundred and fifty of his songs. I had to learn a song every day. When I did that, it caused me to think about songwriting in a totally different way. Every time I've come across a lyric that I just loved in one of his songs, I'd think, "Now that's interesting how he said that. I wouldn't have thought of saying that in that same way." Then, I realized what I had been leaving out of my songwriting. When Van writes a song, it's almost like he's sitting down and talking to you. It makes so much sense. Then of course, he taught me all his little tricks about how you can rip off from another songwriter. (Laughs.) I said, "Van, I didn't think you were supposed to do that." He said, "Linda, everybody does that. Don't be silly." It was wonderful learning all that stuff from him. Of course when he hears my new songs (Laughs), he's gonna die, because I took a thing out of one of his songs and put it in one of mine. But he showed me how to do it.

I think they call that "unconscious plagiarism" in the courts.

Yeah, and really it was just one lyric. It's cool. We've written so many songs that it's impossible to write a song and not have one statement in there that hasn't already been in another song. By now it would be impossible, but Van wrote a love song like one I had started to write called "Meet Me In The Indian Summer," which is coming out on his new album in September. When I was writing this song called "Out Of The Shadows," I was writing about something that happened during Indian Summer also, so I put "Indian Summer" in it - but I think mine will be out first.

At your age, do you think it's unusual that you're still learning and absorbing influence?

You know Ken that is the beauty of me. It should be an inspiration to a lot of women my age, because I am fifty-three and I'm still learning, still growing as a talent. Today, I am a hundred times better songwriter than I was a year ago. I'm ten times a better singer than I was a year ago. I've always been a really good singer, but I'm now a better singer. I play better piano - learning different styles of music helps you when you come back to play your style. You bring something extra with you, it's in your subconscious, and it's now a part of what I do. So, I'm never going to be the same piano-player, singer, or songwriter again. I guess it would've been a great thing if I had been a singing genius like Tanya Tucker, when she was twelve, she was a great singer. I wasn't at twelve, I mean we could listen to "Season Of My Heart" [her 1963 recording debut] and we can hear that wasn't so. But, I did have talent and I was determined and, at the age of fifty-three, I'm willing to say that I can still learn something and I can still grow! It makes you younger. Why should we have to be old and decrepit before our time? If we go on mentally and keep an open mind, I think it keeps us young. And, I don't think women should just quit at the age of fifty, sit at home and do nothing. You know, I started my solo career at thirty-nine.



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When most people would be quitting.

Exactly. I did the opposite of what most people did; I just kind of took it easy until then. (Laughs.) I never worked so hard in my life.

When is the new album coming out?

Darlin', I would say that my new album will be out by August. There'll be a single coming out pretty soon. You know Greil Marcus [renowned writer, author of *Mystery Train*] has become a Linda Gail fan and he wrote the most wonderful review of *You Win Again*. Basically he was saying that it would've been nice if Van Morrison had gotten out of the way and let me sing more because it's my kind of music – rock'n'roll. Then he said, "Would someone please let this woman make her own album?"

Well, I'm glad that happened. What other songs will be on the album besides those you cut in Austin?

We're taking some of the best, most requested numbers off of the album we released in the U.K. [1999's Sire release]. "The Dark End Of The Street," "Never Wear Mascara," and that song Tim Krekkle wrote. So, we'll have six, maybe eight songs off that album. I don't know, Mark, bless his heart, he likes everything I do so much, I think he's got sixteen songs for the new album, which is too many. He's probably going to cut down from that. Of the new songs, we've cut six. We've done a really nice remake of "Treat Her Like A Lady," changing the lyrics to "Treat ME Like A Lady." It really turned out good because we've got the Jordanares singing with me on it and Charlie McCoy playing some mean harmonica. We've got a world class fiddle and dobro player – everyone who can afford her uses her in Nashville. Then we got the five songs I wrote, "It's A Beautiful Day," "The Sweetest Love I'd Ever Had," "You're Everything I need," "Out Of The Shadows," and "Love So Real," which is a rock'n'roll song. So, we've got a little bit of everything. "It's A Beautiful Day" has a gospel feel to it. "Out Of The Shadows" is like a jazz song but it's a country song.

Did you like cutting down in Austin?

I absolutely loved it. It's the best recording session I've ever done in my life. Two of those songs, "Sweetest Love I've Ever Had" and "Out Of The Shadows," we cut live on the floor in one take. We tried to do 'em again the next day to see if we could do 'em better and everybody said, "Please don't do that song again," because the cut we got on the spur of the moment was so

great. All that stuff was so easy to do – those guys can really play down there! They are so talented.

Is there a lot of piano on this?

"It's A Beautiful Day" has got a piano solo in it, and there's a little piano on "Love So Real," but that's really a guitar song. It just turned out that way; it just sounded really good with lots of guitar. "Everything I Need" I didn't play on – it has a lot of piano, but not mine. I don't know how I wrote this song, it's not like anything I've ever written, but it wouldn't have sounded right with me playing on it. It's R&B and that's not what I play and we had this guy who was playing [Hammond] B-3 and stuff. I wanted the very best piano I could get. I'm telling you Ken, these songs are right up there – Van is going to be shocked.

Will you be playing a little more widely in the U.S. to promote it?

Our goal now is to get an agent here and tour more here.

I'd be remiss in my duties if I didn't ask about this terrible controversy concerning Bonny Lee Bakely and Robert Blake.

Right, you go right ahead, darlin'.

Was she ever a recording artist in her own right?

Not really a recording artist. Bonny really couldn't sing. Bonny was just crazy. She just wanted so much to be in the limelight that she would do anything. So, she did a record that wasn't very good – that was before I knew her. Then, some guy wrote a song for her, and I thought this was really pretty funny and pretty smart. She said, "Linda, I went in the studio and just decided that well, I can't sing and I know that. So I just took the lyrics and I just talked instead of singing." (Laughs.) So, it was like a rap song almost. The guy wrote the song especially for her because she followed Frankie Valli around and my brother and she was an Elvis fan and all that. I'll never forget it, the music's playing in the background and Bonny's saying (deliberate stilted reading for comic effect), "Rock'n'roll music is my fame and Rockin' Lee Bonny is my name." (Laughs.) But, then I admired her because she was smart enough to know she couldn't sing, so she didn't try that again. She was really quite a character.

A story that came from the Los Angeles Times said you and Bonny Lee had sued a British tabloid.

Well, I don't know why Bonny sued 'em because she didn't have a prayer. The attorney that we went to told Bonny that if she wanted to sue, she'd have to pay him. Now he took my case and was willing to take 25% of what we got. She had to pay him because she didn't have a leg to stand on.

What exactly did this British tabloid allege?

What they said was that Bonny was selling pornography – which was true, but they also said that I was doing the same thing, which was utterly ridiculous. I've been into lots of things in my life, (laughs) but never into selling pornography. How that all came about is Bonny, as crazy as she is, took one of my tapes and advertised it to these magazines that advertised for lovers and stuff. Swinger magazines I guess you'd call 'em, and she put a photograph of me in there with a swimsuit and stuff. But I said to Bonny, "Bonny you didn't tell me it was those kinds of magazines." Because it was embarrassing, I had people calling me up, musicians and stuff saying, "Oh, are you into swinging?" I said, "What? Why would you think that?" It was so crazy. The bad thing that came from it was that one of the British tabloids, the *Sunday Mirror*, printed like a huge article and said, "Goodness Gracious, Jerry Lee's Little Sister Is Selling Porn!" So, I sued them and I won, because I wasn't.

What did you get a retraction or some cash?

Well, I got money but I don't think I'm supposed to tell. But then somebody else told me "As long as you don't tell how much there's nothing they can do." But I signed a thing saying I would never tell.

The article I read it said the attorneys involved couldn't remember how the lawsuit turned out.

Really?

That's what it said. I wondered how an attorney would not remember how his business went on a case.

It was a guy in Memphis and I don't even remember his name, but I wonder if they spoke to him? He might have signed something saying he wouldn't discuss it too, because he had me sign this contract that said, "You get this money but you can't never tell anybody what you got, because if you do you have to give it back." (Laughs.) Which would be a real problem right now.

It goes out as fast as it comes in, doesn't it?

Oh, I'm in terrible shape financially, because I've been doing a lot of stuff for my kids, and of course I live in two houses. I've got my place in Wales and I've got my place here in Big Sandy. Eddie and I, my husband, we're still together and it's a miracle. The place in Wales is right outside of Cardiff in Penarth. It overlooks the Bristol Channels. Everybody keeps telling me I can't afford it. It's almost like living on a boat because when you wake up all you see is this water. But getting back to that porno thing, that was the most damaging and horrible write-up I've ever gotten in my life.

As far as you know, is Bonny's child Jeri Lee Lewis, actually your brother's child?

As far as I know, that is not my brother's child because – what I know about Bonny is – y'see Bonny had a charm about her and she could make you like her even though you knew she was a bad person. But if that had been my brother's child, she would've sued him and gotten money from him. That was how she made her living basically.

Were you and Bonny only friends for a short time?

No darlin', I considered Bonny a friend for a long time. She did some horrible things to me, like putting me in those swinger magazines – I guess it's not that horrible. Whatever people want to do is their own business, but it was a little bit embarrassing. Of course, then she had an affair with my [7th] husband, the Elvis impersonator. I kind of considered that as a favor. My husband that I'm married to now [former Stax-Volt promotion man Eddie Braddock], he wouldn't have done that – at least not with Bonny. He's probably had an affair, I suspect that he has, but he wouldn't do something that casual. The Elvis impersonator guy, he was sleeping with everybody, and until Bonny slept with him, I didn't know. So, she did me a favor and it opened up a whole thing where everybody was telling me, "Well, we didn't want to tell you but he's going out with so and so." He was going out with like ten different women. That was a little bit of a problem, but she did me a favor in a way. But our relationship had lasted for years.

Where were you when you heard about Bonny getting shot?

Now, this is really spooky. That Friday [the day Bakely was killed], I just gotten a new phonebook, because you know I'm mad at Van. So, I put his name and all the people that work for him in the back of my phonebook where it says, "These are numbers that I hope I never have to call." (Chuckles.) And I'd written little things out beside their names like "wimp," "asshole," things like that. So, while I'm filling out my new phonebook, I was talking to my sister and I said, "You know Frankie, I haven't talked to Bonny in a long time and I might give her a call." Of course, Frankie had been telling me how she had been doing and stuff. And do you know I wrote her name in my book that Friday, and that was the night that she was shot? How weird is that, Ken?

That's a Twilight Zone moment.

It's so weird.

I was amazed that your publicist managed to get you on things like *Larry King Live* and *The E! Hollywood Story*.

Was I on *The E! Hollywood Story*? I didn't know that.

Yes you were. They were doing the whole thing about Robert Blake and Bonny Lee, and all of a sudden, there you were.

(Laughs.) I didn't know I made that one, that's fantastic. They must've used something from some other program.

I was disappointed in the Larry King show; I waited the whole hour just to see you.

I know, they didn't let me say enough. They talked to that guy who was real stupid.

Bonny's half-brother?

Yeah, he was terrible, wasn't he?

It sounded like he hated her. First he'd say "I love her because she's family," then he'd say the most incredibly awful things.

And he said crazy stuff like "Well, she's on a cold slab of ice." Then he started telling everybody his political views about the right to bear arms. (Laughs.) I was talking to another friend after *Larry King Live* and I said, "You know, that idiot tried to make it look like I didn't know what I was talking about." But this guy was a really good friend of Bonny's and I asked, "Did you ever see Bonny with a gun?" He said, "No, not ever. She never had guns." So that guy didn't even know her. The only brother that Bonny had that she liked was the gay guy out in LA – him she really loved. She didn't like her sister, she didn't like that guy on the show – he didn't even know her. He was just making money off the thing.

When was the last time you actually saw Bonny?

I saw Bonny maybe about two or two and a half years ago when I played at the Hollywood Casino. She came to my gig. That was one thing that Bonny was always good about doing, she always supported me. If I played and she was in that town, she would be there. That was why you couldn't totally dislike her, because she was loyal and she would always turn up. If you had an album or something, she'd always be the first one to buy it. Bonny was a funny person. You could be sitting there talking to her and she would be telling you about some horrible thing she did to somebody, but you just couldn't help but laugh. (Laughs.) Like this one she had gotten some money from. She said, "Well, I just got that guy to send me some more money." I'd say, "Well Bonny, how in the world did you get him to do that?" It was some guy in Nevada, in Las Vegas, and she called him from a pay phone. She said, "I called him up and I told him, 'The train sign said Los Lobos and I thought it said Las Vegas and I got off at the wrong stop.'" (Laughs.) She was really crazy and I couldn't help but laugh, she was just really funny. She was working her own angle and those guys did get something for their money though. They got nude pictures and stuff, they shouldn't complain too much. Nobody told 'em they had to be a pervert. (Laughs.) Bonny used to call 'em perverts. She'd say, "I make my living off of perverts." That what's she said when I fussed at her for putting that ad in a swinger magazine, she said, "Well perverts have a right to listen to good music like anybody else." She was a character.

I'm so pleased that you called, even though some of this stuff is probably distasteful to you.

Darlin', I will never lie to you again. I shouldn't ever have let Van influence me; it pisses me off so bad.

Do we want to print that?

Oh, I don't care; it's up to you entirely. My life is an open book.

Of the stuff we've talked about, some will only care about the new album, while others will only be interested in your affair with Van.

(Laughs.) It was obvious anyway. Anybody who ever saw us on TV or anybody who ever saw us together knew that we were having an affair.

The album [*You Win Again*] sounded very intimate.

We were in love. We were madly in love. Then he broke my heart. I'm always going to love him. I haven't stopped loving him. This is the predicament that I was in – I loved Van. I love my husband too. But I loved him in a different way than I loved Van. I wouldn't have ever given up Van Morrison but I couldn't give up my husband either. It finally reached a point at Christmas when Van said; "You take care of this. You get rid of him and you ask him for a divorce." He said, "You do something drastic but you get this done." He really, really demanded that I do it. And Ken, I thought I could

because I loved him so much. So, I told him that I would. Then he stayed up with me all night because he really didn't want me to go. We were in the hotel and we sat up all night drinking champagne and talking, and he said, "Now listen – are you going to take care of this? Are you going to be able to do this? Are you going to be strong enough to do it?" I said, "Van, believe me. I can do anything that I have to do. It's not a problem, I'll take care of it." And Ken, when I got here I suddenly realized that I couldn't walk in this house with this Christmas tree here and say, "Yes...Merry Christmas, and can I have a divorce?"

That would be kind of cold.

I looked at Eddie, and Eddie looked at me, and tears just started rolling down his face. I never even told this to anyone else, but I looked at him and tears started rolling down his face and he looked at me said, "It's over, isn't it?" When I saw the pain in his eyes – and I know that he loves me, I couldn't do it. I just put my arms around him and said, "No, it's not over." So, I had to make my choice right then. Then New Year's Eve, when I met up with Van, he tried to bring it up in front of his girlfriend that he's been with for seven years! He wanted to just spill the beans and tell her everything. She looked so upset and I felt so sorry for her. He came over and sat down by me and stuff and they said, "You'll have to leave this room because they're closing it up." So Van looked at me and said, "Well, just come to my room and we'll have a drink there." Right in front of her. Then he turns around to me as we're walking down the hall and says, "You're not going to wimp out on me are you?" He wanted to have a showdown with everybody. Ken I just couldn't do it. So, it went from bad to worse.

Do you suppose that's why he started cutting things out of your portion of the show?

I think that was a problem – the fact that I didn't leave Eddie. I think the other thing was that I upstaged him in LA – that's the first time I ever really upstaged him and Ken, I didn't really mean to do it, I just got carried away. It wasn't premeditated, "Oh, I'm going to upstage Van tonight." I was responding to the excitement of the moment – Jack Nicholson is my favorite actor. (Laughs.) I know that makes me sound shallow. "Jack Nicholson is watching ME!" And the piano stool goes flying out – it was the wildest show I've ever done and it was great. When I'm really rockin', I can hold my own with anybody. Jerry Lee Lewis doesn't want me on his show either – but he loves me, and he's glad to see me. He won't even let me do a duet with him anymore.

That's too bad because you guys were good together.

I think with Van it was the personal thing and when I upstaged him that was really the nail in the coffin, because the personal thing I think would've taken longer. It was going the other way because I hadn't gotten the divorce, and I wouldn't go to his room with him right in front of Michelle and say, "Yes, this is what we're doing, so get lost." I didn't want to do that; I felt it was pretty bizarre. Van is really crazy and he does things in a crazy kind of way. But the thing in LA that was the main thing, because I promise you, nothing means as much to him as his music. That's the most important thing in the world to him, and that's one of the main things that he appreciated about me – that I came into his life, I loved him, he loved me, and because of that he no longer had writer's block. He had writer's block for years. That's the real reason he did the skiffle thing with Lonnie Donnegan. Whenever you see Van Morrison doing a collaboration, he's not doing it because he's eccentric and wants to try lots of different things. He's doing it because he doesn't have any new songs. Van had two songs that he'd written, well three if you count "No Way, Pedro." Well, you can't do an album with just three songs and he's trying to live up to what everybody expects of him and he can't be open and honest like I am and just say to the world, "Look, I've got writer's block." Van can't do that. He's got to put on a front and say, "Oh, I want to do a skiffle album. Oh, I want to do a rock'n'roll album." But it was all a cover. He was either going to release an album he'd done with the Rimshots, a

group in Wales, a country album with stuff like "I Can't Stop Loving You," or he was going to do this rock'n'roll album with me. I think he figured out very quickly that I would promote the album and be a better bet than the Rimshots – so that's how all that happened.

By the way, how did that album end up selling?

Van's manager, Willie Richardson told me that it would end up selling around a half a million copies, but the number he gave me was 350,000. I think Soundscan says something like 250,000. It could be that it's hard to check because I don't know if they get all the figures from places like Australia all at once. I don't know how Willie got his numbers, but I don't what he's basing that on. He used to run Virgin Records and then he went to work as Van's manager.

I thought it was one of last year's best albums.

Well Darlin', I appreciate that so much. You know; we had so much fun doing that album. We really did and it was the real thing. It was us cutting live on the floor with the guys and very little overdubbing.

It's not going to hurt you to listen to that album now that you and Van are on the outs, is it?

No darlin', it doesn't hurt, because it hurts so bad anyway that one more thing isn't going to matter. Once your heart is just totally broken, when you hit the bottom, there's no way but up.

Is everything OK between you and Eddie now?

Everything's great!

Well, you have told me everything I wanted to know.

(Laughs.) And maybe even some that you didn't want to know!

Well, I get embarrassed talking about some of the personal stuff.

Darlin', I'll get you out of that soon enough! (Laughs.)

Our thanks to Webster & Associates for setting up the interview and providing photos and to Linda Gail for her gutsy openness.

Ken Burke can be reached at driguana1@aol.com.

Writer's note. This is my fourth interview with Linda Gail Lewis. Other talks ran in *Original Cool*, *Blue Suede News*, *The Jerry Lee Lewis Canadian Fan Club Newsletter*, and *Country Standard Time*.



Recommended Reading.

The Devil, Me, and Jerry Lee By Linda Gail Lewis with Les Pendleton Longstreet Press / ISBN: 1-56352-526-7 (166 pages)

Linda Gail Lewis' highly entertaining autobiography is rife with tales of sex, drugs, and religious hypocrisy. Though she offers previously unknown background material on famous cousins Jimmy Swaggert and Mickey Gilley, most will want this book to learn the no-holds barred truth about her brother, Hall Of Fame rocker Jerry Lee Lewis.

Yes, according to Linda Gail, Jerry Lee was strung out, callously fired his bass player after accidentally shooting him, experiences violent mood swings, and goes through women like Kleenex, regardless of his marital status. Yet as sobering karmic payback for his life of excess, the aging rocker is now a prisoner in a gilded jail cell.

Suffering the whims and financial machinations of his current wife and father-in-law, the threatened removal of his only surviving son being the whip keeping him in line.

While validating the worst in the Killer's character, Linda Gail also portrays her brother as a heroic figure. Through sheer force of talent, her elder sibling lifted their family from hand-to-mouth poverty to a life of relative economic ease.

Brother Jerry's lifestyle nearly killed her, yet Linda Gail clearly remains in awe of his amazing talent. Indeed, the yarns spun paint a picture of a girl who so strongly identified with her philandering brother, she became shockingly (yet unapologetically) promiscuous.

Characterizing herself as a "spoiled little bitch," Lewis reveals sordid details of her eight marriages and dealings with estranged children, few of which portray her in a positive light. These revelations establish a rather skewed vision of fairness which somewhat rationalizes the titillating contents.

Co-author Pendleton has constructed a narrative showcasing Lewis's genuine voice and attitude; which is by turns, catty, philosophic, salacious, and irresistibly funny. Nearly every chapter rings with sassy punchlines and pungent observations. However, this is not a perfect work.

Often Lewis' stories lack chronological details which many fans find essential. As a result, a reference dating from the 70s might be smack in the middle of a story about the 60s and 80s data curiously ends up in an anecdote concerning the 50s. In addition, her own career at Sun Records, successes at Smash Records, and later recordings are sadly unexamined.

Balancing tabloid-style shock with tales of show-biz sin and redemption, Lewis easily one-ups her brother's autobiography on the score of candor, humor, and perspective. Flawed, though fascinating, *The Devil, me, and Jerry Lee* may be as close as we will ever get to understanding one of greatest musical performers of all-time: Jerry Lee Lewis.

Recommended Listening.

(A preview copy of Linda Gail Lewis' new album *Out Of The Shadows* was not available in time for this article.)

Jerry Lee Lewis *The Locust Years... and the Return To The Promised Land* Bear Family / 15783(1994) After leaving Sun Records in 1963, Jerry Lee Lewis brought his prolific Pentecostal rhythms to Smash Records, a division of Mercury. Though he cut some of the finest sides of his career including three remarkable live albums, the legendary rocker couldn't jumpstart his flagging career with hit records.

Working with producer/guitarist Jerry Kennedy, the "Killer" recorded everything he could think of - r&b, flat-out rock, crossover country, pop, gospel, soul, and even a little folk-rock. Finally, in 1968 Lewis hit the Country Top-5 with the yearning honky-tonk classic "Another Place, Another Time." Thus began in earnest a 13-year career as a perennial Country Music hit-maker.

This eight CD set encapsulates everything Lewis recorded for Smash/Mercury through 1969 and, simply put, it is a magnificent body of work. The Killer sang better during his Smash years than at any time in his life, and his piano playing expanded into evocative blues and honky-tonk while retaining its rock'n'roll intensity. Moreover, the stylistic experimentation appealed strongly to his eclectic artistic nature and showcased the strongest aspects of his unique recording persona.

Particularly fine are the country duets between Lewis and his sister Linda Gail, most of which were featured on their 1969 LP *Together*. On such sizzling numbers as "Sweet Thang," "Milwaukee Here I Come," "Moon Up Above," "Gotta Travel On," "Roll Over Beethoven," and "Jackson," Jerry Lee's rich vocals blend brilliantly with his sister's brassy barroom tenor. The result is a spirited, though overlooked, Country Music classic.

Linda Gail also recorded a solo album, *The Two Sides Of Linda Gail Lewis*, but that particular collector's item has never been reissued. Naturally, all of Jerry Lee's material has been rereleased. The recommendation here is to first buy the Sun-era recordings in either single disc or boxed set form. *Locust Years*, replete with tremendous booklet notes, is the next riveting step.

Van Morrison, Linda Gail Lewis *You Win Again* Virgin / 7243 8 50256 2 2, 2000

During the 1989 all-star tribute *Jerry Lee Lewis & Friends*, the pumpin' piano king can be seen valiantly struggling through a show glutted with big-name sidemen playing at cross-purposes. The legend's evident disgust and stupor finally lifted when Irish-rocker Van Morrison appeared. One of the few artists capable of tapping into his brand of gutbucket blues and barroom country, Morrison's rowdy duet jolted Jerry Lee to life.

Afterwards, Lewis and Morrison allegedly cut a duet of "Tupelo Honey," but no album came forth and we are the poorer for it. However, Morrison has teamed

with the Ferriday Fireball's sister, Linda Gail, for this rollicking set of country, r&b, and flat-out rock'n'roll.

Their harmonies are somewhat erratic, but Morrison and Lewis sound genuinely enthralled with each another. Whether crooning pedal steel odes to guilt ("Crazy Arms," "You Win Again"), hillbilly remakes of r&b classics ("Cadillac," "Baby, You've Got What It Takes"), or salacious blues rockers ("Think Twice Before You Go," "Real Gone Lover"), their work resonates with stormy passion and unbridled lust.

The surprisingly versatile Red Hot Pokers offer ample support for Morrison's wailing blues harp and the distaff Lewis's Jerry Lee-styled keyboard runs. Though over half the playlist is drawn from the Killer's catalog ("Let's Talk About Us," "Jambalaya") this is less a tribute than a truly satisfying roots-revival disc with a lot of sex appeal.



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THE ATLANTIC MANOR

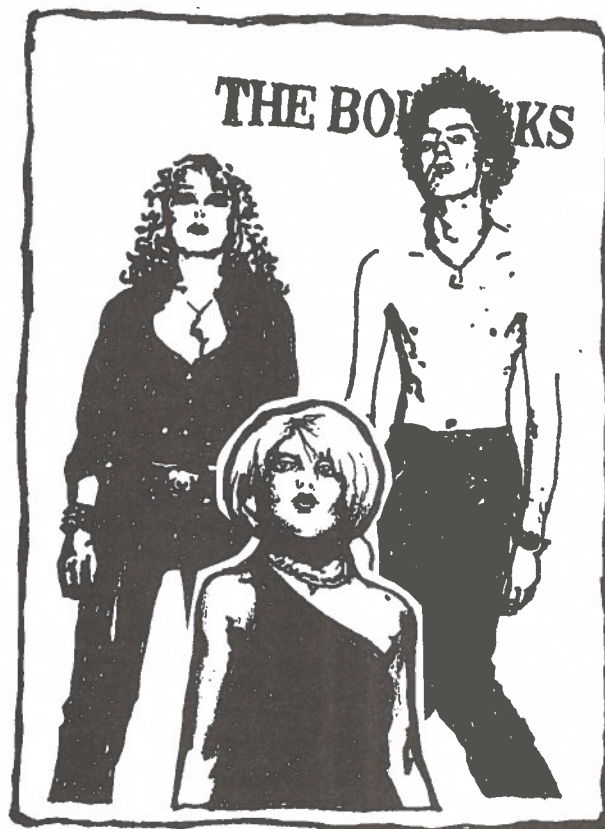
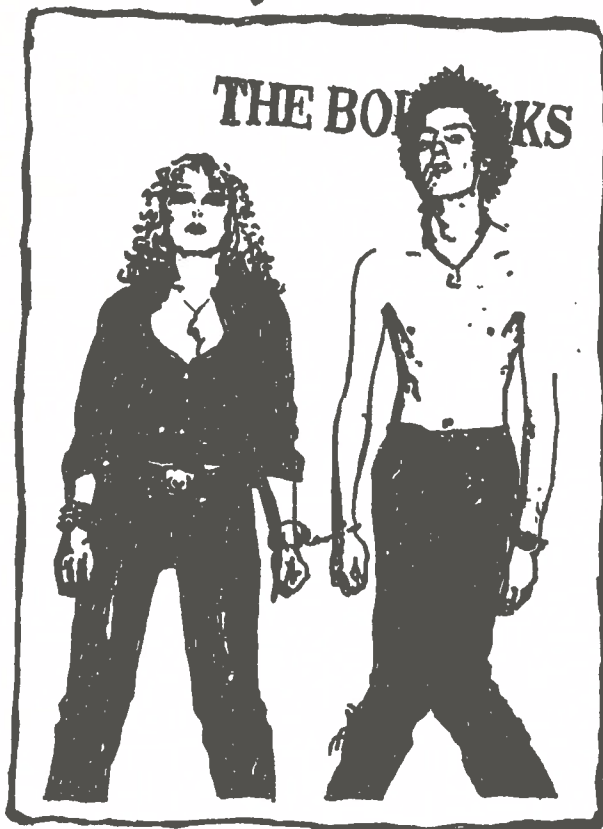
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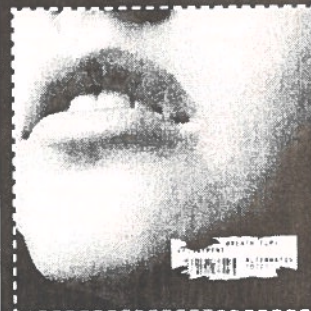
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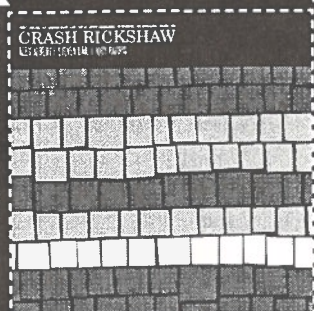
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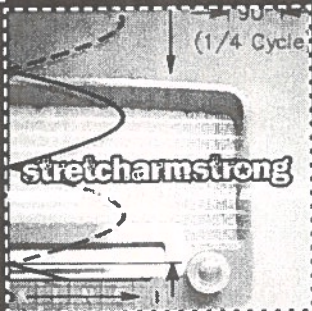
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O-BITS

BY JOHN BATTLES

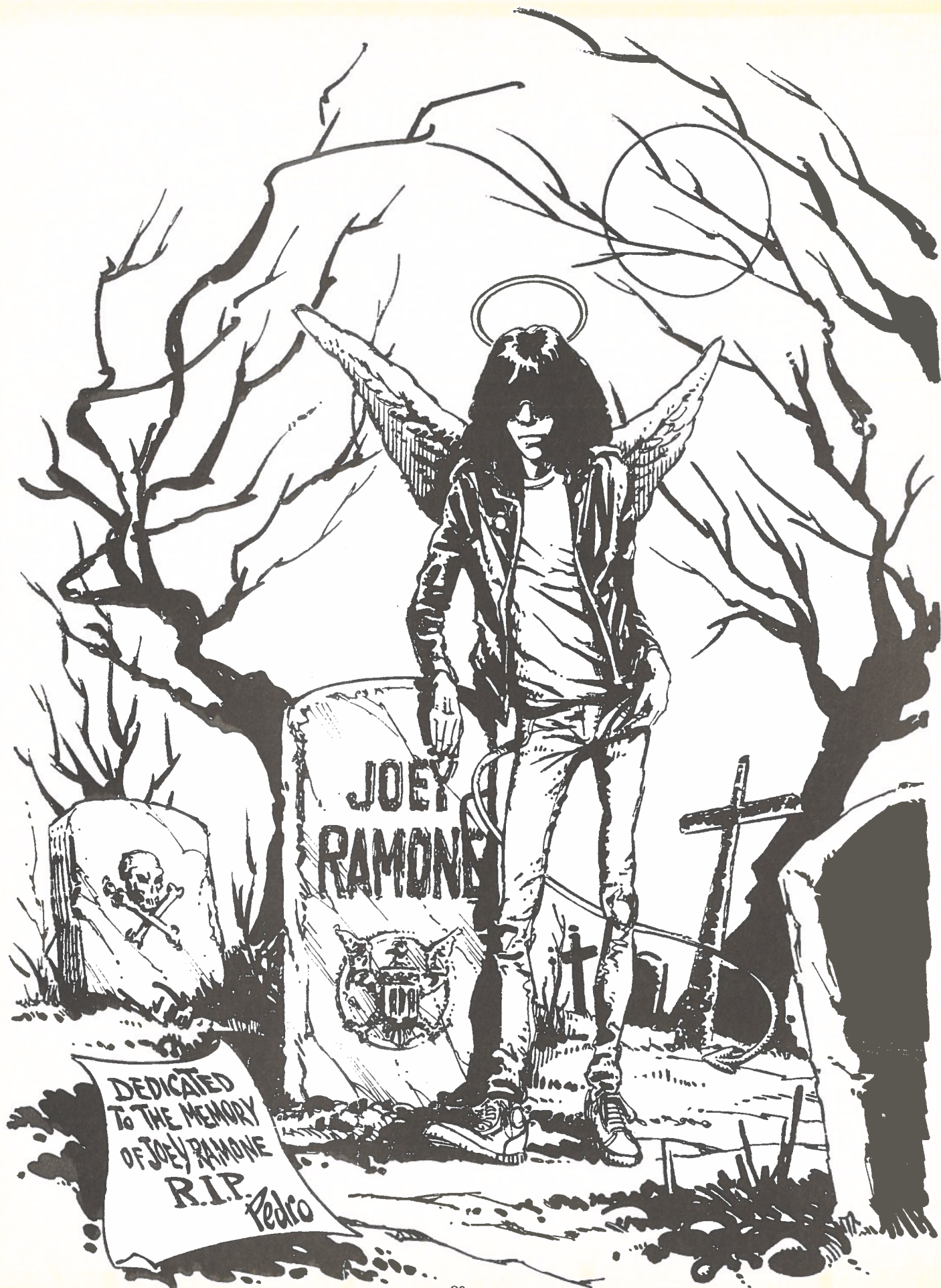
DAN GALINDO, former bassist for the legendary 13th Floor Elevators, passed away recently in Austin, possibly from cancer, (cause of death unconfirmed at presstime). While not a founding member, his fluid, distinctive bass lines can be heard on the band's celebrated sophomore release, "Easter Everywhere," as well as their swansong LP, "Bull of The Woods," a unique, if incomplete, Psychedelic communal wafer (Recorded largely in the absence of key members, Roky Erickson and Tommy Hall, the former being involved in a drug bust, along with lead guitarist, the late Stacey Sutherland who, aided only by Galindo and drummer Danny Thomas, did as much work as he could on the album before being sent to prison. Erickson, of course, did three years in a modern day Bedlam called Rusk, and Hall fled to San Francisco, where he remains today.. "Finishing that album was a labor of love for Stacey," Roky's brother, Sumner, once told me. Galindo himself didn't turn up in any musical aggregations of note following the Elevators' inevitable demise, though he recorded one 45 with The Storm in the early 70's, and apparently recorded with The Rubayyat, labelmates to The Elevators, on a fine Psychedelic version of "If I Were a Carpenter" in 1968 (Which appears, along with "Wait For My Love", an unreleased Elevators track notable for Galindo's bass playing, on the recently reissued comp, "Epitaph For a Legend"). Galindo did not participate in any of the later band reunions (In '72, '77, and '84 respectively), but remained friendly with former bandmates, even turning up a few years ago at one of Roky's birthday shows. Reportedly, Galindo had been selling cars in the Austin area for several years, and, like most of the surviving ex- Elevators, was not playing music on a regular basis. Stacey Sutherland, I'm sure, intends to change all that. May the Circle Remain Unbroken..

Sadly, **BRIAN PENDLETON**, original rhythm guitarist for The Pretty Things, also died within days of Galindo. In later years, Pendleton kept an impossibly low profile (So much so that he was difficult to contact regarding royalties owed him), though he did make a rare return to the concert stage just a few years ago, covered in *Ugly Things* magazine. Pendleton will always be remembered for his aggressive, clanging guitar style, an after-effect of the early 60's British Blues boom, but also a direct precursor to Punk. In the wake of renewed interest and increased activity for The Pretty Things, Pendleton's death stands as a reminder of not only what was, but what could yet have been. As always, one is urged to consult the new *Ugly Things* for an in-depth report on all Things Pretty, including a loving tribute to Pendleton from associates and bandmates alike.

"**SMITTY**" (nee Michael Smith) started out as a guitarist with Paul Revere and The Raiders in 1962, but went on to become drummer (On the grounds that he was far better at it) for the classic '63-'67 Raiders' lineup, which, after several worthy false starts, began their mammoth hit streak with 1965's "Just Like Me", going on to "Kicks," "Hungry," "The Great Airplane Strike" and "Good Thing." Of

course, their regular spot on "Where The Action Is" would find them performing their hits, excellent (If overlooked) album tracks, and even hastily recorded (but often quite good) covers of the hits of the day. Smitty, along with bassist Phil "Fang" Volk and guitarist Drake Levin, departed from Paul Revere's camp in '67, apparently over artistic differences (i.e.- Not always being allowed to play on their own sessions, but then, Revere often opted not to play on his own recordings!). Revere's staunch anti- potsmoking stance didn't sit too well with certain band members, either. The three recorded under the nom de plume of Brotherhood, and made three LPs for RCA until Smitty rejoined The Raiders (Now their official band name) in 1971, at which time they released their biggest hit, "Indian Reservation (The Lament of The Cherokee Reservation Indian)" and LP of the same name. The Raiders released one more LP, "Country Wine," which actually has some pretty strong tunes on it, and several singles (The best of which were "Powder Blue Mercedes Queen" and "Song Seller," a Jimmy Webb song about kissing ass to "The Man" to get a hit. It wasn't a hit, but Sugarloaf had the same idea (and virtually the same lyrics) with "Don't Call Us (We'll Call You)," and scored big two years later. In 1975, Paul Revere and Mark Lindsay called it a day, Revere soon forming an Oldies revue band with some members of the last installment of The Raiders (They continue to this day). Outside of the Oldies camp, however, The Raiders' performing careers. have been at a high water mark. Mark Lindsay has been performing and recording with The Chesterfield Kings, Phil "Fang" Volk made a surprise appearance at the last Las Vegas Grind, and in 1997, Lindsay, Volk, Levin and Smith put on a triumphant Raider reunion concert in Portland, Oregon (See *Ugly Things* # 17). It's sad that Smitty is no longer where the action is (At least as you and I know it) , but we'll carry the big beat with us always- "GRAB YOUR WOMAN , IT'S "LOUIE, LOUIE " TIME ! YEEEAHH, STOMP, SHOUT AND WORK IT ON OUT !!"

BIG DADDY ROTH, the name just Oozes cool, from his insane hot rod designs to his celebrated, imitated, though never duplicated Rat Fink cartoons (which have adorned t-shirts, models, stickers, comic books, toys and other items known to piss off parents and confuse the squares for four decades). On a purely commercial level, the last 10 or so years have been VERY good to BDR fans, with more cool stuff (And, admittedly, some crap) available than anyone with a life has time to take in. But, Roth's work didn't speak to those who never left the house, it's the stuff that makes you feel ALIVE, the way the best Rock n' Roll does. In fact, it's no secret that Big Daddy Roth and Rat Fink have been immortalized in song by the likes of The Brood, The Misfits, The Cramps, The Rats, and the studio aggregation, "Mr. Gasser and The Weird-O's," or that his former assistants (By the 80's, in true Warholian fashion, Roth did next to none of his own illustrations, though he created a new companion to Rat Fink called "The Junkyard Kid," which debuted on the cover of The Birthday Party's "Junkyard" LP) include R.K. Sloane, "The Pizz," and, of course, Robt. Williams. Personally, Roth will always stand as a reminder of what it REALLY meant to be a kid, and that there's no reason you can't still BE one...If you want the full story, pick up his autobiography, "Confessions of a Rat Fink". Til then, MAZOOMA!! COLOR ME GONE ! VROOOOOOOMMM!!!



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Gabba Gabba *HUH?! Remembering Joey with a Guide To* *RAMONEBONICS*

by John Battles (with Jake Austen)

The book, *'Scuse Me While I Kiss This Guy* deals with Rock lyrics that are often heard the wrong way, like "Blinded By The Light" (it *does* sound more like "douche" than "deuce" on the original version). I certainly have a few favorites in this genre: "I Think I'm In Love" by Eddie Money (who was interviewed by Dan Epstein in these pages) prompted a popular in-joke, "I think I'm in love, cuz I can't get it up," (I saw Dan sing it that way once with Lava Sutra). A lot of geniuses thought "Aqualung" by Jethro Tull went: "Spitting out pieces of his broken lung." Tommy Tutone had an early minor hit that was called, "I'm Addicted, Baby," which he pronounced, "I'm a *DICKHEAD*, baby" (I heard a D.J. introduce it that way once).

And, of course, misheard, seemingly dirty, lyrics are nothing new. I went out with a girl who told me her dad was in a band that opened for The Kingsmen, who supposedly told him, "Of course we said 'Fuck' on 'Louie, Louie.'" Another friend's dad told me you weren't cool in his crowd 'til you heard, "That new Gene Vincent song, 'Lotta Lovin' that goes, 'Well, I wanna wanna lotta lotta FUGGIN'!"

BUT the prize for achievement in the field of unintelligibility goes to a man who aced out even Jagger and Stipe in their prime. I'm talking about a man of (blurred) vision, the late but unbelievably great Mr. Jeffrey Hyman, better known as Joey Ramone. Ramones LPs came with lyric sheets for a REASON. But being in college with the middle class poverty blues, I usually bought albums used, as cut-outs, or I taped friend's copies (home taping isn't killing music, the radio took care of that) so my early Ramones acquisitions were of the no frills, Portugese-made college bookstore variety. Thus, I had a confused take on the soundtrack for my confused youth. Here's some of my early interpretations of the works of The Bards of Forest Hills:

"**I Wanna Be Sedated**" - "I can't control my fingers, I can't control my brain" became "I get it from my teachers, I get it from my friends" (In high school, that one line summed it all up for me, even if I DID have it wrong.)

"**Glad To See You Go**" - "Gonna smile, I'm Gonna Laugh" became "Gonna Smile, I'm Goldilocks."

"**Gimme Gimme Shock Treatment**" - "Shock treatment, I'm doing fine" became "Shot in Vietnam, I'm doing fine."

"**Oh Oh I Love Her So**" - "So we took the car downtown" became "So I took her to Carny Town."

"**Swallow My Pride**" - "Loose lips sink ships they say, but isn't it always that way?" became "This lipstick sure tastes sad, but isn't it hosiery?"

"**I Can't Give You Anything**" - "But who's gonna bring home the loot?" became "But who's gonna bring the ludes?"

"**Rockaway Beach**" - "I'm friends with the President, I'm friends with the Pope" became "Our friends met the President, our friends met the Pope" (This took on new meaning when Amy Carter, the then President's daughter, arranged to have an audience with her idols, The Ramones).

Anyway, I came to find out it wasn't just me going, "What the heck did he say anyway?" If you ever get a chance to check out the Japanese version of "It's Alive" you'll find there are fewer tracks (it was a single LP there) but it's still a great value because the lyric sheet is a laugh riot. Like many Japanese versions of American LPs, the lyrics are phonetically transcribed into an approximation of English by some poor linguistically challenged employee. Not to get down on 'em, it's not like I know many Japanese words, beyond a few key greetings and monster names. Check these out:

Joey sang: "Gabba Gabba, we accept you, one of us"

The Japanese heard: "**Gabba Gabba, you're a weed, such a weed 'Cept you're one of us**"

Joey sang: "D-U-M-B everyone's accusing me"

The Japanese heard: "**C.U.F.E.-everyone's accusing me**"

And the bizarre transcriptions keep going and going:

"Well, the kids are all hopped up and ready to go, they're ready to go now. They got their surfboards and they're going to the discotheque a-go-go" transformed itself into, "**Well these things are all what she thinks are groove, they're ready to go now. They got me so I can't listen to good tunes.**"

"Next time, I'll listen to my heart, next time, well, I'll be smart" was heard as, "**Mister, listen to my heart, mister, rock me some more.**"

"They both went down to Berlin, joined the Ice Capades" morphed into, "**They both look dynamite when their eyes are big.**"

"Suzy is a headbanger, her mother is a geek" unsettlingly became, "**Suzy is a headbanger, her mother is a Jew.**"

Remarkably, they even transcribed the stage patter, so that, "Take it, Dee Dee" transmogrifies into the cryptic, "**Take it Tulu**"

Well, you get the picture. The Ramones gave new meaning to Dali's theory that confusion is the purest form of communication. And no one provided more glorious confusion than the man who mumbled more magical moshpit mantras than anyone! In fact, I'm sure that as you read this, Salvador Dali and Joey Ramone are working it out, and whoopin' it up, in that great Rockaway Beach in the sky.

And Joey's wearing a Gabba Gabba Halo!

A Gentleman, A True Star: **MEMORIES OF JOEY**

by Gary Pig Gold

Late one night in very late 1976, a singer acquaintance of mine burst into the (condemned) house I was then sharing with the local bar band, shouting "You will NEVER believe what I just saw in Toronto tonight! These four guys with Brian Jones haircuts wearing drainpipe Levis, singing all these really fast, short songs. LOTS of em, too! And the best part? NO GUITAR SOLOS!"

Now, this being the absolute height of *Frampton Comes Alive*, it's hard to completely fathom today the socio-musical import of that final kernel of information. But of course I was hooked, and the next time the Ramones landed in Canada, I made sure I was there.

The Dead Boys were opening: Sure, Stiv was allota fun crawling over and across the drumkit during "Hey Little Girl," but the headliners truly were, in every sense of the word, The Real Thing. So I duly invited myself backstage to conduct their first interview on Canuck soil, and despite nearly getting bounced for taking a snap of Danny Fields writhing beneath a fridge in search of a runaway pencil. I was made to feel totally at home by the band's deep-rooted, deep-seeded LOVE of all things Rock and especially Roll: Johnny's coming-of-age watching Elvis' Ed Sullivision debut as a child. Dee Dee bemoaning the fact that it was hard getting the band going "coz rehearsal halls wouldn't let us in, ya know," and Joey. Dear sweet Joey. He asked all about my record collection, claimed Peter Noone and Ronnie Spector as his two primary vocal idols, then wondered where a good place was to go see some local bands play later that night..

How utterly, disarmingly Refreshing, to say the least.

So we drove the R. brothers straight over to Toronto's Crash and Burn club to see teenage head throttle some old Eddie Cochran and Swinging Blue Jeans tunes, ran into Phil Lynott somehow lurking by the bar, then we all went out for some classic Canadian pizza slices (...mainly crust 'n' cheese, Tommy was complaining).

Through it all, and then during subsequent fleeting meetings, Joey remained every inch the dichard, gentle man FAN of Our Music. And despite the fact that he and his bandmates literally Changed The World, I simply prefer to remember the man instead as nothing but the tallest, and needless to say COOLEST, Herman's hermits fan I ever did meet.

Gabba Gabba, wherever you are.

TO CATCH A FALLING STAR

by GARY PIG GOLD



Wit duly sharpened and tongue even firmer within cheek than usual, I treated the Sunday New York Times news of Perry Como's death as little more than an excuse for yet another funny-if-informative article. Yet exactly as when I polled pals-o-mine regarding that Pat Boone feller awhile back, I was somewhat taken aback by the vast amount of overwhelmingly heartfelt – and uniformly quite positive – views and remembrances of the man, by both fans and peers alike. You just can't judge a crooner by its cardigan, as I guess the saying goes.

And so I've decided to keep myself out of these proceedings as much as possible, in order to present a mere sampling of the kind words received in response to my "Have you anything to say about Como?" query. Then, when all is truly said and done, perhaps we can simply agree to agree that there quite possibly isn't that very much of a gap after all between, for example, Power Pop and Perry's pop.

From R. Stevie Moore, perhaps the only person ever to work with both Kramer and Como:
"Como was way cool. Always. In my book, the novelty songs gave him the edge, though it's said his legacy is forever tarnished because 'he'd record anything anybody shoved in front of him.' But us Fifties kids actually really dug the silly 'Papa Loves Mambo's, 'Catch A Falling Star's, 'Hot Diggity's and 'Juke Box Baby's. His TV show was seminal. He somehow stood out from all the other crooners, methinks. Rest in Peace, Per. And don't let the stars get in your eyes ...pere ubu."

My only thoughts: Perry Como and Eddy Arnold were both important in balancing the artsy crooning of Bing and Frank with a more manly chart presence. Just as David Bowie needed Slade and Chuck Berry had to answer to Pat Boone, Como provided a populist setting for the perpetuation of many great songs. Plus, Como didn't go on to host a smarmy talk show, and he had the funniest line when Bob Hope did a great "Star Wars" parody during one of his NBC specials. A fat woman

was playing an alien, and it was scripted for her to break character and run over to Como as a big fan. "Hug me," she screamed. In response, Como sang, "It's impossible..." He couldn't keep a straight face, either.
(J.R. Taylor, "New York Press")

Unlike most adult contemptuous crooners afraid for their careers with the advent of Elvis, the Perryman embraced rock by having the Everlys and Fats Domino on his show, even though Mr. Saturday's idea of "rip it up" usually involved a packet of Ovaltine. Even though Como released records with kiddie names like "Hot Ziggity" he resisted the urge to rip it up until 1961, when he released "You're Following Me," written by Burt Bacharach, the same man who scribed "Magic Moments." With no Top 20 appearances since the "Magic Moments" era, Como decided to embrace the new rockin' sounds. Someone must've put something particularly strong in Como's Ovaltine that session, causing him to sign off on uncommonly loud bass, drums, Scotty Moore-ish guitar leads and maniacal "sha da da"s from background singers who sound like they were hijacked at gunpoint from a Bobby Rydell record.

While the authoritative finger snaps that open the song might make the Jets and Sharks jump into rumble stance, having Mr. C. make like the Fonz with lines like "When I've got the time I'll slip you a kiss" must've had the kids doubling over with laughter. Still, it is a lot more rocking than the substandard material Como's labelmate Elvis was releasing with frightening regularity by this time. After that, he gave himself fully to somnambulists and sweater wearers everywhere. He'll be missed, when we realize there'll be no Christmas specials from Serbia.
(Serene Dominic, "Phoenix New Times")

He lived to be 88 and seemed a pretty centered guy, so good on him. Seems like it all worked out.
(Adam Marsland, Cockeyed Ghost)

Well, part of the tragedy of guys like Como is that his brand of good, tuneful, light pop ("Magic Moments," "Round And Round," "Catch A Falling Star"-- even 1970's sunny "Seattle") is all forgotten and dissed, simply because it wasn't "rockenroll." Yeah, we all dig rockstuff, but this behemoth/juggernaut -- composed of music, marketing and a whole cultural aesthetic -- has an uncomfortably fascistic bent: ie, it mows down everything else. So, Como's (admittedly modest but surely pleasant) accomplishments are lost to future generations, as are Herb Alpert's TJB, Jack Jones, Pet Clark's post-"Downtown" stuff, Mancini's Top 40 hits, et. al.
(Gene Sculatti, Director of Special Issues, "Billboard" Magazine)

I have some thoughts about his death:
I "thought" he had already died some time ago.
I "thought" his song "Round And Round" wasn't as good as my song of the same title.
I "thought" the law and the law won.
Actually, in truth, Perry Como once gave my father a monogrammed money clip (my father worked on Perry's old television show ...not his 1980's show "Perrysomething.")
(Michael Lynch, fufkin.com)

it's impossible
ask a baby not to fly
a life without perry como?
now who's schedule will mick jagger look at to see if he is too old to tour?
(Peter Noone, aka Herman, winner of VH1's "Viewers Choice Award" Sexiest Pop Tart 2000)

I was reading a Brian Wilson interview a couple of years back and when asked what he'd been listening to, Perry Como was one of the "easy listening" singers he listed. The next time I came upon a Como album in the dollar bin, I snatched it just to check it out (remembering very little of his records ...just the TV specials). He was a fine crooner -- no match for Sinatra, Bennett, Nat King Cole etc -- a "pleasant sound" was what many wanted and that's what he had! I can't predict if his voice and those arrangements will cross many more generations as I think the others I just mentioned will.

(Bill Lloyd, Set to Pop as always)

It is with great sadness that I heard of the passing of Perry Como. How many of us remember those Christmas eve get togethers at Mom's, sharing those old family anecdotes, sneaking shots from the already watered down bottle of Five Star, Mr. Relaxation crooning "Good King Wenceslas" in the background.

Actually I have not one, but TWO Perry Como stories: A good friend of mine who was then known as Little Brucie Griffin was actually booked to be on the Perry Como Show at the age of four. His shtick was singing and playing the harmonica in blackface. Also my idol, jazz singer Jimmy Scott, a seventy five year old negro dwarf who sounds like Billie Holiday, told me that Perry Como was his favorite vocalist. He may or may not have been joking, it was hard to tell.
(noted Canadian Ted Hawkins)

I am old enough to have loathed Perry Como. The Anti-Elvis, no less. In addition, it always struck me that catching a falling star was a good way to set fire to your cardigan.
(Deviant Mick Farren)

Here's my thought: Not to take anything away from the man's talent, but the death of Perry Como brings to mind an era when someone could build a career out of projecting an image of amiability. In our time, in a culture dominated by images of phony rock "rebellion" and idealized rap "thuggery," this would be pretty hard to carry off.

Factoid #1: Perry Como received the first gold record at a time when one had to sell 1 million (not the 500 thousand you have to sell now).

Factoid #2: I know the guy who wrote the Como hit "Round And Round." It's the same guy, Lou Stallman, who wrote the Yankees theme song. (I'm a Met fan myself, though.)

Comical take #1: Because of Perry Como, I wasted years trying to "Catch A Falling Star" and put in my pocket. I could never do it.

Comical take #2: Como started the Latin explosion with his hit, "Papa Loves Mambo." Dig that subtly-veiled eroticism. Now that's what we call "Como-sexuality."
(Eytan Mirsky)

Perry Como was one of the few singers who had nothing to prove with his voice. Every once in a while he'd let loose just to prove he could do it, but most of the time he just did his job: he quietly, comfortably hit the notes and sang the melody. No fuss, no affect, no attitude, no problem.

Other pop singers with that quality are few and far between (Rick Nelson comes to mind) and it is much easier to point out the anti-Perrys on the scene (Michael Bolton probably being the Prince of anti-Perrys). Anybody who needs a lesson on how to get there (wherever there is) with a minimum of fuss just needs to listen to Perry sing "Round And Round." All you need to know about life is in there.

I'd have to say that of all the singers my parents listened to, Perry Como probably had more to do with the way I sing than just about anybody.

(Shane Faubert) (whose Cheepskates actually recorded an entire EP's-worth of Comosongs a decade ago)

Among my earliest musical memories are hearing Perry Como singing "Round And Round" and "Hot Diggity" on the monophonic AM radio in my parent's '57 Plymouth. I loved those songs, because to my impressionable adolescent mind they sounded exciting. When I discovered Top 40 rock in the early '60s, I tossed aside Como as hopelessly uncool -- my parents' music. But around the time I began broadcasting at WFMU in 1975, I encountered Mr. C's Greatest Hits in a used LP bin, and was sufficiently over my (then) prog-rock snobbery to recognize that the guy had style, class, charisma, and a soothing way with a song. I'll take him over Sinatra or Tony Bennett any day.

(Irwin Chusid, WFMU Radio)

Como made musical history with the outspoken December 1945 political single, "Dig You Later," which commemorated the Allied victory in World War II with no small amount of bravado. He also championed the crossover of country music into mainstream acceptance with his December 1952 cover of Slim Willet's "Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes" and by being one of the first television hosts to spotlight Hank Williams Senior, who appeared on Como's long-running (1948-1963) variety show in 1951.
(Mike McDowell, "Blitz" Magazine)

Other things about the Son Of The Barber:

His fans are many and from all walks of life. The late Flip Wilson loved Como. So does country singer Don Williams. Sinatra didn't understand his appeal, but Crosby did and was flat out jealous. Dean Martin knew he could sing rings around Como, but that such a stunt would make him look bad. There would be no Andy Williams without Como's influence. Of course, Pat Boone's favorite singer of all-time is Perry Como, which speaks volumes without actually saying anything.

My wife loved watching Como on the tube when she was a child, and that seems to be where (despite several dozen hit records) he made his greatest mark. Less an icon than a popular artist, he wore well on TV, like a sleepy uncle who had to be begged to sing a ditty or tell a joke.

I'll never forget his on-air interview with Carl Perkins, at the time fresh off the accident that allowed Elvis to take the Rock'n'Roll throne unopposed. An obviously contemptuous Como noted the sales of "Blue Suede Shoes" (two million), to which a grinning Perkins replied, "Yes, Perry, it's made me very happy." Deliberately looking away from the grinning rockabilly titan, Como muttered smoothly, "Yes, I suppose that would make you very happy, Carl." Then he intro'd the song and ran off stage as fast as possible. Como lasted longer than Perkins, yet is not as revered today. There is no Perry Como revival. He was just another singer, while Perkins was at the forefront of a revolution. Would Perkins liked to have changed places with Como? You bet. So would most anyone in rock at the time. He was a huge star, much loved, and bankable as all get out. Perry Como knew that a pleasing personality would make you more money than would all the fireworks and artistic pretensions in the world.

A final word: "Como" is Spanish for "what?"

(Ken Burke, still continuing on the Saga of Dr. Iguana)

Ya know, I remember going to a Perry Como concert all the way back in 1976, and getting in very early as the roadies were setting up. A Disney truck was backed in and, even though I was almost a hundred feet away, I swear I saw them roll Perry out on a dolly and stand him up at the front of the stage. I watched that thing for a good fifteen minutes and it never moved. Later, during the show, Perry was in that spot in that position and he never moved a muscle. Only difference was someone had put a prop mike in his hands. So you see, Perry Como has actually been dead for many decades now. All that's happened recently is Disney cut back another program and Perry got caught up in the numbers game. I know we've lost a crooner here in the real world, but we've gained another cutthroat in the Pirates Of The Caribbean. Rust in peace, Perry.

(D.J. Johnson, "Cosmik Debris" Magazine)

I talked to my grandparents on Mother's Day and the subject came up. They said, "Nobody ever had anything bad to say about Perry Como" (as opposed to many of today's stars). Of course, my grandfather related that he wasn't thrilled when he had to wake up at 5 AM one Saturday morning to take my aunt to the airport to see Perry off on a tour.

(Blair Buscareno, "Teen Scene" Magazine)

How could you not like him? I mean, what was there to possibly piss anyone off?

(Chris Butler)

Exactly, Chris.

See you later then, Perry. And Thanks for the Pop.

JOHN LEE HOOKER

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THE EVIL BRO' OF PUNK HEAD



HEY DUDES! HOW GREAT IT'S NAPSTER!
I'VE JUST DOWNLOADED A DUETO OF
MARILYN MUNSON SINGIN' W/
AARON CARTER. YUK!!



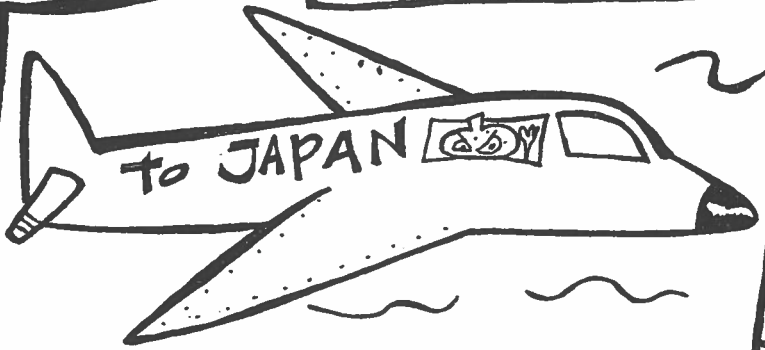
by MR. BRATO

BUT....

EH?!

SORRY BUT JUST
BECAUSE THOSE
GEEKS OF METALLICA
ARE CRYIN' OUT LOUD
YOU WON'T GET FREE
MUSIC ANYMORE BUT
I'M A MILLIONAIRE, HAHA!

THIS IS A BIG....
OFFENSE TO ALL THE
MUSIC LOVERS LIKE ME
I HAVE TO
DO SOMETHING



BRING ME
NAPSTER BACK!!

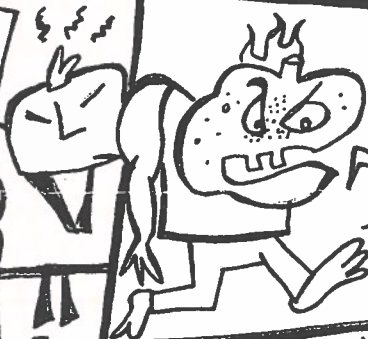
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BIG BUCK INC

WE'RE LOSING
MONEY SO GET OUTTA HERE!

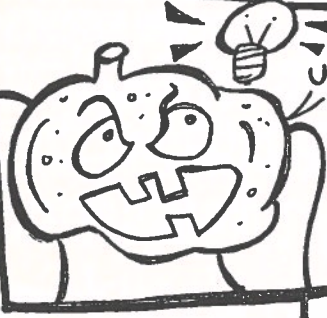


PRESIDENT

WHATTA DECEPTION I HAVE
TO START SELLIN' DRUGS
AGAIN TO BUY CD'S OF
MY FAVE BANDS!!



CLONC!



BUT
UHM!!

KEEPSINGIN'!!



oops I
did it
AGAIN!!

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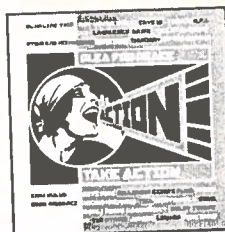
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NARDWUAR VERSUS HALFORD

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Halford: Who am I... who am I... (laughs)

You're the metal god! Now the rumour is that you played "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" at a theatre. Is that true?

No no no no. Where is that from? My life is surrounded by rumours. I'm like one big rumour. What you might be thinking of was a baseball event that I was a part of with the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball team at the Bank One ball park. It opened some years ago and I sang the national anthem there with Dave Mustaine, Alice Cooper, Nils Lofgren and a bunch of other local talent. And that was a really cool special event, but that's my only association with baseball 'cause still after all these years I look at a baseball game and say, "What is that guy doing over there?" and "Why is he running over there?" You know? I'm still confused as all hell when it comes to baseball.

Rob Halford, your new CD is amazing. I mean, it's amazing. You're totally back. I mean, not that you were gone before, but like the 3.5 octave range...is that why you can hold the same notes for twenty years? How do you do it?

I don't know that it's coffee... lots of coffee, and nicotine, which I'm not using right now for health issues, but I will when I finish this interview. Umm, but I don't know. I mean, the thing about singers is that we've all got different abilities. We're born with what you've got. What I tried to do when I began this heavy metal thing years and years ago is just experiment and do as many things as I could do with the voice. And I've just been given this gift of all the extra possibilities. You know, like notes that only dogs can hear, that kind of a thing.

(Reading Rob's Lyrics from his new CD, Resurrection) "I am God.

I am Hate. I am all the sins you...

Make.

I was curious Rob, you've been kind of pegged over the years as a Satanist. For instance, from the Washington Post, January 1991, "Halford loves opera and classical music and collects modern art..."

Yeah, where does...

...and then they go on to say "Not your average Satan."

Yeah, (laughs) but where does Satan come into all this?

They love digging at that.



Well you know it's because they've got nothing else to talk about. They want to find some kind of controversial moment. So they kind of sit there at their typewriter thinking "Judas Priest... that sounds a little... Judas... that was the dude that did the bad stuff on Christ. Okay, that's kind of evil. Priest? Yeah, there's something really malevolent about this. Okay, Satan's there somewhere."

You did throw in '666' on your new album "Resurrection". (Nardwuar then shows Rob the book *Rock: Practical Help For Those Who Listen to the Words and Don't Like What They Hear* by Bob Larson) Have you heard of this guy Bob Larson, Bob Halford?

Bob Larson? No who is this guy?

He's from the Bob Larson Ministries. Check this out. This is a quote here about Judas Priest from his book, If I could just read it right here to you. "With a stage act ranging from smoke bombs to bull whips, the leather clad image of Judas Priest..."

(Looking at a particular word Nardwuar missed reading out) "Bellicose!" I love this word "bellicose," I'm going to use this word on the next Halford album. I swear that I will use the word "bellicose."

I was afraid to pronounce it... continuing on, "Fits well with their heavy metal earsplitting music. Dressed in chains and studs, singer Rob Halford has been known to drop his leather drawers mid-concert." Have you ever done that, Rob?

Yeah I do that most nights. Yeah why not?

"When asked if he was personally involved in the S&M love torture techniques parodied in his performances Halford replied, 'To a certain extent. Sexually I've always been to the fullest extent of the experience S&M has to offer. It's nice to experiment by yourself and get off on whatever you get off on.'"

Yeah, my best friend is a jar of baby oil and a porno mag.

"A rock magazine promoting one of your other albums may have said it best 'Judas Priest has sin for sale.' " Rob Halford, what do you think of that?



I don't know exactly what this book is about. What is it about?

It's about all of the 'bad' bands...

(Looking at back cover of book) They listen to the words and don't like what they hear?

Well... I guess I was curious do you have a dungeon in your

house?

Yeah, actually. I do actually. Yeah, I have a dungeon and it's in my place in Phoenix and it's right next to the workout room. Uh, 'cause you have to pump up a sweat before you go into the dungeon routine. But in the dungeon I've got like a sling, I've got like a gynocological chair, I've got whips and chains and black candles and all this other cool stuff.

Which is...

Which is up for sale shortly 'cause I'm moving.

On the internet?

That's a good idea. eBay. Watch out!

Just like some guy from Stryper put who put up all his stuff for sale. I think one of those Stryper outfits was for sale.

Y'know KISS just had their big auction. You could buy a piece of crap from KISS for like two thousand dollars.

But Rob, what's amazing is Pat Boone... you're approved by Pat Boone. Pat Boone covered one of your songs, right? Explain a bit about that. Like the parents should know that. Y'know, screw Satan!

Yeah, you know isn't this bizarre. Here's Pat Boone bubbling, speaking in tongues, trying to heal people with his hands and he gives me a call and says, "Rob, will you sing on my album, 'Pat Boone In a Heavy Metal Mood'?" (laughs) So he sends me this kind of swing Las Vegas version of... (snaps his fingers and puts on a crooner's voice) "You Got Another Thing Coming" baybee, yeah!

Right here before your gig, Rob, what is your pre-gig warm-up? I heard you listen to a lot of Sabbath.

I think this is it. I'm having it right now. I could literally walk from this room and rip the skin off people's faces.

(Reading Rob's lyrics) " Saviour: There can only be one. I'm the master past and future." People look up to you, Rob. "Heavy Metal Parking Lot." You were out in the parking lot just earlier. What do you think about the movie "Heavy Metal Parking Lot?"

That's a semblance of everything that we do. The people out there are what make everything that we do happen.

The one from '86. The movie from '86. Do you remember that? Did you ever go in the parking lot?

Yeah, (laughs) I've been going to parking lots ever since I got into rock'n'roll. And that's a good place to see and meet the real people. Meet the real fans. They're out there right now here in Vancouver in the parking lot. I was just hanging out with them, signing stuff, talking to 'em. You know, wherever we go, that's where it's at.

Well, it's a good thing you didn't go there in '86, that lady wanted to "jump your bones," and you wouldn't have been able to go up on stage.

Well... didn't you know yet? (laughs)

Rob, what came first S&M fashion like in "Cruisin'" or S&M fashion in Heavy Metal? Like who stole from who?

Way before. That whole S&M thing was way before even heavy metal. I got this vintage collection of all that stuff and it goes way back to the '50s and '60s. I mean, I took that as a way of expressing the music that I was a part of because metal when I began had no visual connection. So when I started to put on the leather jacket and the whips and the chains and everything, it was absolutely perfect. Here was a look, here was a image

that completely tied in to the sound and the power and the drama of the heavy metal itself.

And you completely influenced people. One of the times you played in this very arena here, the Pacific Coliseum, in Vancouver, in 1984 ... this is a picture, Rob, of all the stuff that was confiscated at the door of that concert!



(looking at photo) Yeah, and I've got this one... that's in the wardrobe case... I've used these chains.

This was all your fans'. All the stuff that was taken away from your fans. That's pretty heavy. And then also this (showing Rob another Priest picture by Bev Davies) was from the same gig as well that night. Do you remember that night, Rob? Y'know, 1984, Vancouver.

Nothing more than the night. (Rob then eyes at a huge spiked wristband he was wearing in the photo) Look at that.

Did you ever get into trouble with having spikes sticking out like that...

Yeah, I'd try to get on airplanes, commercial flights with stuff



like this in my bag. I remember on more than one occasion when I'd get to the security and they'd go through my bag and find whips and chains and cuffs. And I would actually have to give them to the pilot. And they'd say, "we'll give you this when you're getting off the plane." So I guess there was a pilot at thirty five thousand feet having fun in the cockpit while I was stuck in the back with my peanuts and warm coffee. (laughs)

Pansy Division. How did you meet Pansy Division? You sang "Breaking The Law" with them with changed lyrics up on stage. That was amazing. How did you meet them, Rob?

I met them because I was at the San Diego Gay and Lesbian Pride event...no that's not true...rewind!...I was playing a show in San Francisco and I went to this club which was just like this cool kind of jazz blues rock club and Chris the bass player from Pansy Division came up and introduced himself. And that was years and years ago. And we became instant friends. When they came to play San Diego, I went on stage and joined "Breaking The Law." And they actually did a version on one of their records which is really cool 'cause it's like...

Metallica's was also on their record too! Kirk Hammett playing guitar.

All that kinda stuff. I mean that's a validation for it. They're a wonderful band and they write incredibly good songs. And they're extremely underground, but if you want to check them out...I mean, they're by no stretch of the imagination a metal band. But for the musicianship, they've got this kinda edgy punky rock thing going for them. I think they're really cool guys.

Sebastian Bach ex of Skid Row, didn't he give the name 'Halford' to one of his kids as a middle name?

Yeah, it's his kid called something like 'Ludwig Von Beethoven Halford Tchaikovsky Sibelius Van Boten.'

Also it's kinda sad that your connection to Canada is hitting the ground in Toronto. What can you explain to people about that? You were on your motorbike and there was a bit of a spill, Rob. It seemed horrible.

It's ironic isn't it? Because I've had some of my high points and low points in Canada. And the low point was when I came off the bike at the last show with Priest in Toronto. And uh, somebody sent me a snippet of that actually just a few weeks ago on videotape. It was the first time I've seen it. But I came out under the drum riser and hit the bottom ring of the ladder. Knocked me backwards off the bike. Totally knocked me out for three minutes. And it was the first time "Hell Bent For Leather" was done as an instrumental. But that was kind of a low point. But my high point's that I've started this great tour with a new "Resurrection" CD with the Halford band. We began here in Canada. We've been all the way through.

Why do you think, Rob Halford, that the hard rock world is so homophobic and super macho?

I don't think it is. I think that that's a misconception. I think that that's just the way that it's been presented year after year after year by the press.

But what about Sebastian Bach's t-shirt, remember, "Aids Kills Fags Dead"?

I spoke to Sebastian about that and he admitted that he screwed up. And he was man enough to admit his mistake. I mean, everybody goes through learning process and Sebastian was one of the guys who was cool enough to see that. But I really feel that now more than ever, there's just more of an openmindedness, there's just more

of an acceptance, there's more tolerance. And that things are way better than they used to be. I mean, I admit in the late 70s all through the 80s it was a different world altogether. But I think you know. And when it comes to what I do and what I am, it's all about my music. My music is all that matters.

The Judas Priest song, "Raw Deal." Is the song "Raw Deal" about cruising a gay bar?

"Raw Deal" was a very open song for me. Yeah, that was like really a moment that I thought people might grasp onto, but it just went vvvrrrrrooom right over the top of people's heads. But I mean I've never cheapened the music in so much as using it as a platform for my own personal gain. A lot of my lyrics are subjective. A lot of my lyrics don't have a gender placed on them. It's never 'he and she', because I've always felt that that way it just opens up the listener's possibility to accept it from whatever they want to take it from. But that's just a side issue of a lot of things of who I am and what I am as a person.

(Reading Rob's lyrics) **"Temptation: don't lead me into temptation." Now were you lead into any temptation by Trent Reznor, Rob? The 'two' inch nails?**

Two inch?! No, I'm totally temptation-free. But I'm constantly being drawn onto that path, and I avoid it like the plague. It leads you down the straight and narrow which is exactly what I'm not. (laughs)

What about the e-mail that you've had on the back of your record? It actually says your actual email on the back of the record. It has your website but it also has your email, have you checked that? Can fans actually check out halfordrob@aol.com. Are you checking that?

Yeah, I mean that's what it's there for. If you want to write me and say whatever's on your mind, just go ahead and send it in. We've got this great website called robhalford.com which is a combination of biographies, discographies, all the tour dates, you can buy tickets for the shows from there. You can find everything you want to find out about Halford. Where we're going to go next. What we're going to do next. And that where I would urge everybody to go first robhalford.com. If you want to get personal, send it to my own personal aol account.

And finally here, Rob Halford. We have Paul Stanley in the Phantom Of The...

Opera.

We have Sebastian Bach in Jekyll and...

Hyde.

And we have Rob Halford in Oli...

The what?!

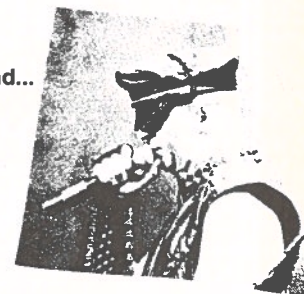
Oliver?

Oliver!?!

Rob Halford in Oliver?

I see myself in 'The Sound Of Music' actually. You know, doing that twirling bit at the start that Julie Andrews used to do with the helicopter shot. That's me. (laughs) The hills are alive with the sound of the metal god.

Thank you metal god! And doot doola doot doot... Doot... doo?



ACCORDING TO JERRY LEWIS...

Dean Martin loved comic books

BY NICK TOSCHES/ERIC SEARLEMAN

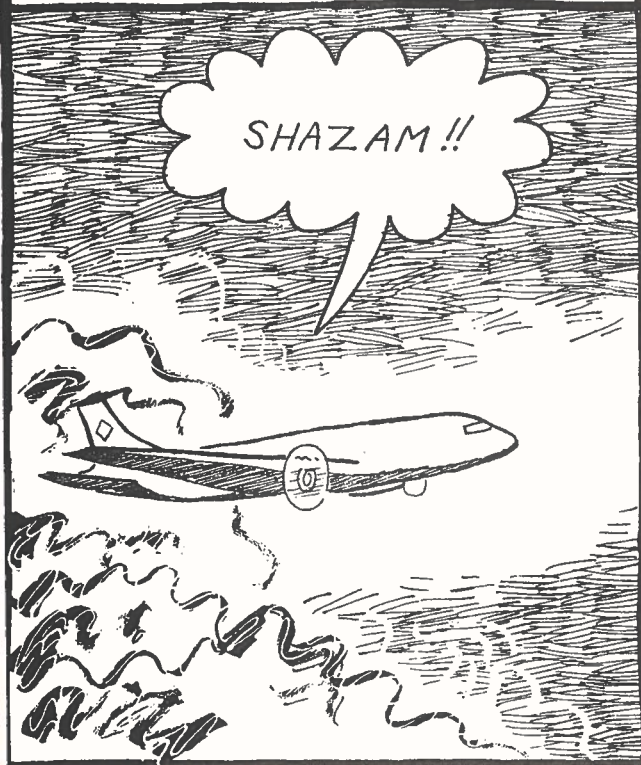
"WE'D GET ON A PLANE," REMEMBERS JERRY, "AND HE'D GET A KICK OUT OF READING COMIC BOOKS."

MAN, THIS LITTLE LULU IS SOMETHING ELSE!



"WHY? 'COZ YOU CAN ESCAPE WITH THEM."

SHAZAM!!



"I USED TO BUY MOST OF THEM FOR HIM BECAUSE HE WOULDN'T GO TO THE FUCKIN' NEWSTAND."

WHERE'S THE NEW ROY ROGERS BOOK... DEAN REALLY LIKES THEM WESTERNS



"I THOUGHT IT WAS
CUTE ... I LOVED IT. "

HERE YOU GO, DEAN

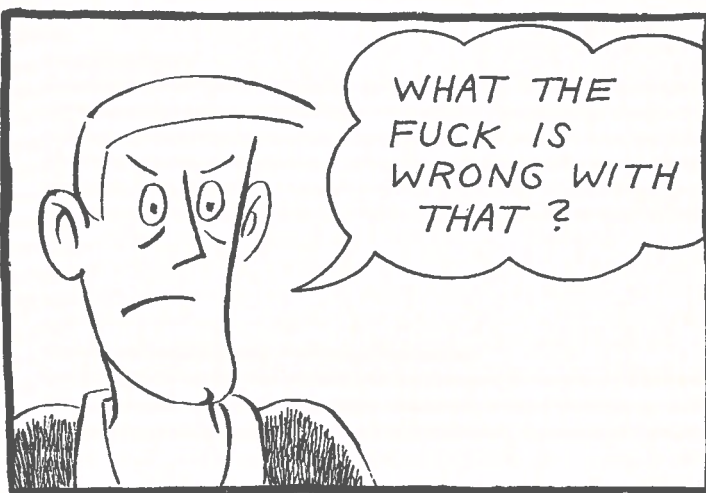
THANKS, PAL



I LOVED
THE FACT
THAT HE
GOT A
KICK OUT
OF COMICS



WHAT THE
FUCK IS
WRONG WITH
THAT ?



"HE WASN'T A
CLOSET
QUEEN, HE
READ 'EM IN
THE PRESENCE
OF ANYONE."

C'MON
DINO....

NOT NOW
BABY, I JUST
GOT THE NEW
ISSUE OF
JOHN WAYNE
ADVENTURE
COMICS



END

Coming In On A Wink And A Leer

DEAN MARTIN Stars As Secret Agent Matt Helm

by Phil Milstein

To any American male who came of age in the the Sixties, the words "James Bond" represent something of a golden talisman. He held the key to making all things dear in life — booze, broads and adventure — come easy. But after a while, Bond himself began to come easy. Bond-worship became so common that it was best left to the unwashed heathens. Matt Helm-worship, on the other hand, was obscure and clandestine, shared by just a select few — the few who *knew* — and as such Helm was greater even than 007 himself. To us nine-year-olds, back then, it was James Bond who could have learned a few things about the Life of the Swing from Matt Helm.

Helm was the central character in four el-cheapo Dean Martin vehicles made between 1966 and 1968, loosely based on a series of novels by Donald Hamilton. Helm is a reluctant secret agent, the anti-Bond, and the films are lighthearted spoofs of the secret agent genre. Helm is ostensibly retired from ICE, a CIA-like government organization that seems to have only three employees, but he keeps getting pressed back into service from his new life as a swinging, globetrotting shutterbug. The photo gig is mostly a front for Helm's *real* career, seducing all the finest babes of the world and sucking the planet dry of Ballantine's Scotch. For Helm, spying takes a distant third place in his affections.

Many years have drifted by since I had seen hide or hair of any of the Helm flicks, and the combination of having originally viewed them through the gauze of impressionable prepubescent eyes and the enhancing qualities of time's distance had elevated them to mythic proportions in my mind. Furthermore, I have since come to savor the concept of the Rat Pack in ways a kid never could, and then to favor Dino as the ultimate Rat in the Pack. After all, it wasn't Joey Bishop who told Sinatra to go fuck himself! My hazy memories of Dino cracking wise while cavorting about the globe in the coolest of threads, chasing evil enemies and makin' whoopee with foxy chicks became ever more tantalizing over the years, but the pictures themselves were nowhere to be seen.

Not that many years ago the Matt Helm pictures began to emerge in VHS editions. One by one I acquired the tapes, but refrained from putting them on until I owned all four. Once I did, I convened a small quorum of like-minded fans to watch, pay tribute and soak up some pointers. To my groovy Central Square crib came A. Scott Hamrah, film maven and expert in all things Rat Pack; Peter Wallace, charter member of the Dean Martin Fan Club and professional weisenheimer; and The Millionaire, man of mystery and expert in the swinger lifestyle embodied so ideally by Helm. I supplied the deli platter.

We sat, we watched, we took notes. Would Matt Helm live up to our ancient and now-glorified expectations as the King of Swing, or would he fizzle like stale Sweetarts? Ah, isn't it remarkable how the human memory repeatedly redeems us from dire misery by retaining the good stuff while distilling the dreck? That same mechanism was operating at peak efficiency when it treated the Matt Helm series.

The Silencers (1966)

The Silencers opens promisingly, with a great title sequence featuring Daliah Lavi, Miss Israel 1960, and several other bathing beauties stripping on a huge stage. It's a lovely Technicolor spectacle. The big bra-opening shot that the sequence leads up to is obscured by the movie's title splashed across the screen. We watch again in slow-mo to see if they cover her nips on time. Alas, they do, and we would later determine this as perhaps the finest technical achievement of the

entire series. Note that this was two years before Roger Vadim used the same idea in *Barbarella*.

The title song, while not quite as memorable as "Thunderball" or "You Only Live Twice," is not half-bad. The lyrics, however, are another story: "If you should see a lady who / has the kind of waist that measures 22 / as she's 38 where it is great to measure 38 / dear sir / she is the silencer." The numbers seem to be thrown around willy-nilly to suggest sex, or perhaps they are a secret numerological formulation. (Joi Lansing, who embodied those figures if anybody did, covered this song memorably for Scopitones. And although Chuck Jackson did not quite stack up physique-wise the way Lansing did, it did not prevent him from also managing a nice version of "The Silencers," which went unreleased until a 1992 Scepter box set.)

We jump to the bedroom of Matt Helm's ultra-swank bachelor pad. He is asleep, which leads to one of the classic dream/song sequences, with lyrics altered to suit the plot, that weave throughout the series. Dean Martin, as himself, plays the role of Helm's Greek chorus, singing, "Oh, we're dancing / just look where it led / I'm in the dream and / he's still in the bed." After watching the Helm series, it's possible to believe the fourth wall might never stand again.

Helm's may be the bachelor pad to end all bachelor pads. It is what the house in *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* would have been like if it had stuck around and grown up. There is a gigantic round bed in the middle of the room. Almost all beds in the Helm series are round, not to mention enormous — super-colossal-king size, at least. But Matt's is the only bed that, when a button is pushed, rolls forward through an auto-opening double-door as its head tilts upward, depositing its occupants into the bathtub-cum-pool in the adjoining room. The pool is usually filled with a lightly-colored bubble water, either chartreuse or turquoise, most likely perfumed at that.

Already in the pool is Helm's faithful secretary, Lovey Kravet, his Miss Moneypenny. Lovey is nude, and waiting for Helm to dictate a memo. They make out for a while, then emerge to be dried off by twin terrycloth automatic buffing cylinders, sort of like overgrown shoe-polishing machines. Matching robes drop down from the ceiling, and his and hers coffee pots pour piping hot cups of java. Helm offers a toast, "to the simple life." We can scarcely conjure a more civilized way to wake up.

Helm is a retired member of Intelligence and Counter-Espionage — ICE for short — and now spends his days gallivanting about the world photographing its most beautiful women for *Slaygirl* magazine. It's a tough life, but since he is still nominally on the ICE payroll he is forced to occasionally return to the dirty business of Making the World Safe for Democracy. His assignment this time has something to do with a tape with nuclear secrets on it. The fate of the free world depends on Helm intercepting these nuclear secrets before they are passed to the enemy, or something like that.



Since Helm and Lovey have to go someplace foreign, she announces that

she's been vaccinated on her shoulder. Helm mutters that "if I were a germ, that's the first place I'd look." Germ, look, shoulder — this line isn't remotely dirty, but Dino's delivery makes it *sound* dirty. This is the humor formula around which the entire series is based, which we dub "half-entendre." The lines are more a leer than a joke, and most of the time they make no sense at all.

We finally meet the enemy, a dastardly organization called Big O. Their members include Victor Buono and Roger C. Carmel, both former *Batman* villains. Buono is the leader. He wears ice-blue contact lenses — or perhaps corneal implants — and has his hair greased back to a very sharp widow's peak. We believe he's supposed to be Oriental. The tip-off comes when he drinks from a can marked Lo-Cal Egg Foo Young. Carmel, one of the fathers-in-law on *The Mothers-In-Law*, plays the top henchman. He's sort of a poor man's Victor Buono. Big O's fortress of solitude is your typical '60s Hollywood conception of what NORAD might look like, complete with wood paneling and plastic rock walls. You know you've really arrived as a secret underworld cabal when your bullets have your insignia printed on them!

Helm comes home to find a strange girl stripped to her nightclothes and lying in his bed. He acts as if this goes on all the time. Daliah Lavi enters and kills the girl in the bed. He still acts like this happens to him all the time. It happens to us all the time too, but at least we get annoyed when it does. Lavi is also an ICE operative. She and Helm are to go off together to fight Big O and retrieve the secret tape. Helm wisely decides to bring some weapons along, so he goes to his gun rack and presses a button. The cabinet unfolds to reveal a hidden door. The contents of this secret compartment? More guns! Why are these guns hidden if the others are not? Helm and Lavi start driving towards Phoenix. Matt Helm is the only secret agent in history to drive a woody. Maybe it's to help make him more secret. Perhaps it's an Astin-Martin woody? No, it's more like a Country Squire. Dino sings a version of "Down Mexico Way," without moving his lips.

Helm and Lavi are now at their Phoenix motel, sitting poolside. Stella Stevens suddenly appears, shoving her delectable tush in Helm's face, as he sings "Red Sails In The Sunset." (It should have been "Red Tails In The Sunset.") She knocks over his drink and says, "You really are a good sport about it. I'm surprised you didn't take umbrage." Helm replies wittily, "Oh, I take a belt now and again." Stevens plays a likeable, well-meaning oaf, sort of a surrogate Jerry Lewis (with whom she coincidentally worked in *The Nutty Professor*). She plays a redhead, a common thread throughout the four Helm flicks, and gives the movie its only glimpses of charm. Stevens moves about the pool riding a moving organ-bar. She tells Helm that "I was on a tour, but the man kept taking me places that weren't on the itinerary." The joke is already implied, but the writers push it further anyhow, as Helm inquires, "Oh? Where was that?" Stevens: "His room." Helm: "Hmmm." That Matt Helm — always at the ready with the snappy comeback.

Now the nightclub scene. Cyd Charisse (with vocals dubbed by Vikki Carr) delivers a hair-raising song-and-dance number dressed in fleshtone tights with black circles — little white hair-things growing out of the circles — in all the strategic places. Her jaunty number is called "In Santiago," and we recall that Chile was in the midst of a revolution right about this time. Perhaps that's what the song is about ... perhaps not. At the song's climax Charisse is shot dead. Her last words concern the secret tape. A big fight breaks out, a fight with all the production values of the *Abbott and Costello Show* and the excitement level of a Steven Seagal picture.

In the motel room, Helm tears the dress off the redhead. This stunt he will repeat in nearly every movie. (Stevens is absolutely fetching in black undies, but her scrumpsh value diminishes by severalfold when it is recalled that she was once Kate Jackson's mother-in-law.) Helm hates Stevens. She's always bumbling and causing damage to his person, plus he's convinced she's involved with Big O. Helm picks up the phone, which emits a poisonous gas. He makes a crack that we cannot fathom at all, something about the "hair of the phone that bit

me."

James Gregory bursts into the room. He plays MacDonald, the ICE equivalent of M from the Bond films. (Perhaps "M" stood for "MacDonald" all along.) At first we're convinced Gregory was Mr. Woodman on *Welcome Back, Kotter*, but we look it up and find that he was, instead, Inspector Luger on *Barney Miller*. Same difference. He and Dino have almost the same vocal delivery as each other, a sort of slurred, half-drunk, mumbling speed-talk. They may have studied under the same diction coach.

Stevens is the only one who heard Charisse's dying words, so she relates them to ICE. Gregory says "it's an international nuclear conspiracy." How clever of him — it's *always* an international nuclear conspiracy! The last words reveal a cryptic direction to a destination in San Juan. Helm and Gregory insist Stevens must accompany Helm on this mission, since she's the one who heard the message. Even though she already told them all she knows, even though she's not a secret agent, even though Helm *loathes* her, she is forced to comply with this strange whim of her government. She and Helm take off together for San Juan. They get in his secret agent wagon and drive across the desert. And drive across the desert. And drive across the desert. We keep waiting for them to get to an airport so they can board a plane and fly to Puerto Rico, but it never happens. Turns out they're headed towards San Juan, Mexico, which none of us have ever heard of but which the director treats as if it's completely obvious. They are pursued by Big O's henchmen who, even though they have their own mountain fortress, still drive mid-sized American cars. When I think ruthless international terrorists, I always think Plymouth Valiant, don't you?

Helm and Stella finally lose the bad guys and begin to banter with each other. It is painfully clear to all but Helm that she knows nothing, but he remains steadfastly convinced of her complicity in the plot against the forces of good. She gets off one of the film's better half-entendres when Helm asks her for her code name. "Three dots and a dash," she replies, "and if you're real nice I'll show you my sorority handshake." At another point she tells him, "You are sick, you know that? S-I-Q-U-E, sick!" We don't quite get it, but her delivery is so good it really does seem funny.

Helm opens up his spywagon's fully-stocked bar. He doesn't merely drink and then drive, he actually drinks *while* driving! Take that, AAA, and AA too for that matter. She turns on the radio, and out pours Sinatra singing "Come Fly With Me." Helm makes a face, turns the station. Out spills the voice of Dino, singing "Everybody Loves Somebody." "Now there's a guy who can sing," he says. This hilarious gag is repeated, in one form or another, in nearly every film of the series.

They pull over to the side of the road to spend the night. Helm presses a button on his dashboard and out pops a bed (alas, not a round one) and the bar. Hence the station wagon — you can't fit a bed and a fully-stocked bar in an Astin-Martin, and make-out vans hadn't really come on the scene yet. Stevens refers to the car as "your own little sex-wagon." They drink. While Helm's pouring inside, it begins to pour outside as well. She leaves the car, apparently due to Helm's flatulence, and stumbles around drunkenly in the mud. For long minutes she repeatedly falls down and gets back up. This interlude in the wilderness is utterly baffling, and on top of that it stops an already-dead movie even deader. Perhaps she is meant to represent earth, and he technology, with his intended debauchery symbolizing the rape of the earth; she has left the car to return to the soil. This is, however, the worst movie mud any of us have ever seen. She gets back in the car. Inexplicably, yet inevitably, they begin smooching.

Cut to next day, Helm and Stevens smooching lakeside. Oblivious to the presence of a Big O operative, they are captured. The agent, of course, will reveal his entire plan to Helm before he kills him. Finally we get back to Buono. He is demonstrating to his brigade a big map of the desert area. There is a red button representing the site of the nuclear missile launch. At an appropriate moment, the button releases an oozing bright red liquid that spreads across the map. The significance of this is not revealed to us. Presumably it represents the blood of all those in the path of the explosion, but that's just a guess. Whatever, it's a cool gimmick. Buono looks about as Oriental as Fred Mertz, and he sounds like he has a C-clamp around his



sphincter as he says "Well, Mr. Helm, it appears we shall have to do without you."

"Cowboy," the secret Mr. Big of Big O, is revealed — it's Daliah Lavi! A double agent! What a fiendish plot twist. She saves Helm's neck and takes him to her bedroom, a pink thing worthy of Sue Anne Nivens. The set designers are the true heroes of this series. Lavi allowed Helm to live so she could fuck him, but he's having none of that. He rips off his exploding coat buttons and tosses them, the ensuing blast provoking the start of a battle royale. A Big O agent steals an ICE pistol and is about to shoot Stevens, but it turns out to be a reverse gun and he kills himself instead. This gag is repeated about five more times during the battle sequence. Buono cranks up a giant laser device, which is not at all a direct rip-off of Goldfinger's and not nearly as terrifying. The battle scene, replete with a golf cart chase, is monumentally dull. It goes on for about 20 minutes, which seem more like an hour, this in spite of us fast-forwarding our way through much of it. Buono captures them again, a countdown gag is stolen from *Dr. Strangelove*, ICE reinforcements appear at the last minute to save the day. The nuclear missile attack is derailed — hip hip hooray.

Stella and Helm go back to his bachelor fuck-pad. Suddenly an ultrasophisticate, she now wears a hideous perm. She, still a clutz, accidentally pushes the button that launches Helm's bed into the pink pool. They kiss. Credits roll. We need a deli break.

***Murderer's Row* (1967)**

With its cheezy, inert drawings, this film features the crappiest credits sequence of the lot. Its lyric-less and instantly-forgettable title song does not help.

We open with laser rays destroying a model of Washington, D.C. It looks something like what we imagine *The Rapture* to be. Karl Malden, in a horrible, formless east-European accent, gives his evil-doing instructions: "These gentlemen (holding up pictures of Helm and other ICE agents) have ceased to amuse me. Still their voices forever." His henchman deftly replies, "What?" Malden explains: "Kill them!"

We are now in a Euro-trash discotheque, which looks more like a high school gym. A dancer with a device that resembles a tie-tac stuck to his back blows up. The explosion, we are left to assume, probably has something to do with the tie-tac thingie. Cut to geisha scene, the set of which looks like a YMCA pool. A Japanese businessman blows up.

We then travel to Helm's photo studio, where he is shooting a layout with Miss Minnesota. Helm is wearing one of his usual turtlenecks, which look like they come from J.C. Penney's. *Someone* must think he looks good in them, because he wears one in just about every

scene. He instructs her, in one of his patented half-entendres, to "just lower your left arm, 'cause we don't wanna hide the Twin Cities." The bones of Ian Fleming rattle around in their casket a little, but Helm persists with the gag. "A little to the left. I don't want to block Duluth." Not to be outdone by an idiot like Helm, Miss Minnesota comes back with, "That's my best feature." What the hell does that mean?!

In a stunning lapse of continuity, Miss Minnesota has now become Miss January. At least they can keep up with the hilarious cold weather gags. Helm moves on to Miss July. "76? Are you kidding? I'm only a 44." Helm: "That's patriotic enough for me." There they go with the cryptic numerology again. Helm has a great gadget this time, a pushbutton bar loaded onto an automatic lazy-susan turret. But the device appears much chintzier than those of the last film — the turret looks like it was spun by hand from up above. It's odd that in spite of the fact *The Silencers* did huge box office, the production values, eensy-weensy though they were in that film, are slashed to bits here, in reverse of the pattern with the Bond flicks.

While Helm mixes a drink, his off-camera alter-ego sings, "There's an old spinning wheel where my head is / can't remember last night, what a crime / well, I'm feeling so rotten this morning / must have had me a wonderful time." "Nothing like fresh orange juice," he drunkenly mumbles. Miss Minnesota/January seduces Helm. He presses the button to dump his bed into the pool, but she protests vehemently. We see a laser ray hovering over the pool, then a small explosion as they hit water. Cut to charred cinders, apparently of Helm and the girl, at the bottom of the pool, as James Gregory throws in a tiny wreath. Now we travel to a fairly elegant bar with a dozen girls dressed in black, Helm's calendar girls in mourning. Some bloated, leather-faced hag sings "Roll Out The Barrel." Scott insists this is Judy Garland, in her final, uncredited, screen appearance. We watch the sequence over and over again, trying desperately to convince ourselves, but we're still not sure.

Gregory is in a car in a garage. Someone gets in. Fear not, sports fans, for it is Helm, still with us. His death was just a ruse designed to throw someone or other off the path, and to stimulate just a hog's-jot of interest in the film. The dashboard has the words "Lux Interior" printed on it. Gregory shows Helm a movie projected onto the car's rear-view mirror. "This is the French Riviera, Matt." Tight close-up of a bikini-clad rump walking away. "Cannes, to be exact." Huge-tit shot. Helm: "Hey, *Valley Of The Giants*." Have you ever laughed so hard you thought if you didn't stop immediately you would die? Yeah, so have I.

Gregory, sounding here like Larry King and looking a bit like him as well, lays out Helm's mission via the rear-view movie screen. A man named Solaris, who has invented the ever-dangerous Super Helio-Beam, has disappeared. ICE doesn't know if he has defected or was kidnapped. He was last seen in Monte Carlo. Helm is now seen driving around Monte Carlo himself. At least this time he's driving a T-Bird. In the glove compartment is a gun and a bottle of Scotch — Ballantine's — and of course the instant he begins navigating the narrow, winding, hilly roads of Monte Carlo he reaches for the bottle. He opens it and Gregory's voice starts babbling out instructions. No, Matt doesn't have the DTs yet, this is just a little *Mission: Impossible* twist. Helm talks back to the bottle: "Imagine doing that to a beautiful bottle of booze. ... Ah, shut up. I'll fix you, boy. I'll join the AA and you won't have anyone to talk to." He seems to be ad-libbing here. As he fiddles with the bottle/tape machine, he is shown driving Monte Carlo's infamously treacherous mountain roads with no hands on the steering wheel! Helm puts down the talking booze bottle and, ever-prepared, pulls a flask out of his jacket. "Say one word and I'll kill ya." He takes a healthy slug. "Ah, now you're talkin'." Takes another. He swings the flask back and forth and gives a very funny, spontaneous facial expression, and thus concludes one of the more unselfconsciously surreal movie scenes I've viewed in some time.

Helm seems to meet most of his redheads poolside, and Ann-Margret is no exception. Nothing half as eventful as with Stevens — no roving organ-bars — and, in fact, A-M in a tight bathing suit, believe it or not, doesn't even look so hot. Scott insists that "she's been totally desexualized by (director) Henry Levin's *mise-en-scene*," whatever that means.

Discotheque scene, seemingly the same disco as where the guy blew up

earlier. Dino, Desi & Billy play a mediocre Boyce & Hart song. The disco dancers are all dressed in garish mod colors, although the cheap film stock seems to have faded them a bit. The dancing is pretty good. A-M is wearing a much better outfit this time, polka-dot bell-bottoms with a short striped top, leaving a vast expanse of bare midriff. Helm and A-M frug up a storm. With her spastic jerking and stuck-pig squealing noises, she too makes an appealing substitute for Jerry Lewis. A-M flies into Helm's arms, and they move over to near the bandstand. Dino of Dino, Desi & Billy — he's Dean Martin's son — leans over and says to Helm, "Hey, now you're swingin', Dad." Helm: "'Dad?'" A-M clears things up: "He calls everybody Dad." She giggles lasciviously, then chants in rhythm to the music, "It's a wise son ... who knows his own ... *fa-ther*." Helm, ever the social commentator, comes back by saying, "The way they're wearing their hair nowadays, it's a wise father who knows his own son." Is it the eerie confusions of artifice and reality that makes the Helm films such treasured, memorable classics? It occurs to us that both Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis had sons who enjoyed moderately successful careers as wimpy mid-'60s pop stars. In fact, Gary Lewis & The Playboys made a cameo appearance in his father's 1965 film, *The Family Jewels*.

A-M now enters into an incredible, squirming, writhing, grinding boogaloo, leering enough on her own to cover her and Helm's quotas combined. A fight breaks out at the disco. Helm clobbers an enemy agent, a bald guy with a triangular steel implant in the top of his head, the Helmsian reply to Oddjob. He looks like the bottom of the Eightball, the old soothsaying toy. Helm says, as he decks Eightball, "I hate a guy who wears jewelry." Helm is captured by the police and taken into custody, then put in a lineup with two scraggly down-and-outers. This leads to some cute gags, such as Helm whispering to one of them, "Don't tell Ma about this." A-M rescues him by not IDing him to the fuzz. Malden is in the police station, too. As Malden and his moll leave, the moll says to him, "Come on, Julian, maybe you can find somebody to run over on the way home," a line probably stolen from a *Bullwinkle* cartoon.

Helm is released and goes to pay A-M a midnight courtesy call. Yi-yi-yi, she is wearing a tiny white sheer marabou-trimmed teddy, huge puffballs ringing her thighs. But when Helm won't come across with the info, she don't come across with the bod. It turns out that she is Solaris' daughter and is hunting for the old man also.

Helm is captured by Malden, we can't remember how. He is interrogated aboard a monogrammed crane, then put on a huge amphibious vehicle, a grotesque hovercraft that, like the dodo, doesn't hover. It looks like the Jabba the Hutt of the boating kingdom. Referring to Helm, Malden says to Eightball, "Make him *crack*. I don't care how you do it, make him *crack*!" The moll has a freon gun. Helm partakes of a freon-infested drink and passes out. The hoverthing reaches shore. The snivelling, sneering Malden, trying his damndest to be seriously villainous, says disgustedly, "There's a whole new breed of scientist today. They smoke, drink, swear, play around, but they won't answer one simple little question: how do you destroy Washington, D.C.?" How, indeed.

Gregory's voice is piped into Malden's lair, offering Malden false information on Helm's identity. "I have that information on James A. Peters. That's not his real name. It's an alias." Why, a pseudonym, even! Helm snaps back, "I have two dogs: a poodle and a missus." Now we're back on the hoverthing, we think. Helm kills a guard with the old exploding cigarette trick. Lingering close-up on surgeon general's warning that "Smoking May Be Hazardous To Your Health." Eightball has fire-breathing fingertips, but Helm counters with the freon gun.

Another disco scene, our third. No movie with three disco scenes can be all bad, especially if they've got Ann-Margret frugging in them. A-M thrusts her hips and shoulders, then launches a wild rocknroll Charleston, obviously gearing up for her Vegas debut. As she gyrates her hat falls off and a prop guy picks it up off the floor. Wouldn't want our A-M to trip on her own hat. Close-up of A-M's fab be-

from a fly's-eye view. The beat gets hotter, A-M begins her patented hair-wave. A giant photo of Sinatra looms as Big Brother upon the rear wall. More undulating fly's-eye camera work, offering twisting, spinning shots — layering octagonal images in identical groups of eight, and then twelve, cell clusters — of A-M's bosom, her legs, her hair. The tempo kicks up another notch higher, and A-M keeps up without missing a beat.

Meanwhile, back on the hovercraft, Helm has taken control as it speeds through the streets of Monte Carlo.

Back to the disco again. Colored lights flash in rhythm to the music. A-M reaches orgasmic peaks just as Helm bursts into the room and rips off her dress, in full view of everyone, in one smooth motion. She covers herself as he throws the dress at the picture of Sinatra, just as it explodes. Helm says, "Sorry, Frank," concluding the Sinatra gags for this outing. Helm and A-M escape in someone's convertible sports car. They are chased by a police minivan. They speed through the city streets. Cut back to Helm and A-M in the car, only now it's his own T-Bird. Did we miss something here, or did the continuity checker?

Helm's answer to the fancy gadgets secreted in Bond's Astin-Martin is a computerized message board above his tail lights, which light up to indicate to the cops that he's got an innocent broad in the car. Now we know where Jenny Holzer gets all her ideas. Helm's next message reads, "If you can read this, you're too close." Helm's messages are in English, but the police are French. No wonder they don't obey. (Is this in fact some kind of subtle, twisted Jerry Lewis reference?) A-M is still in her underwear, which fortunately didn't change when the car did. Now we engage in some odd business where Helm ejects a parachute which blocks his pursuers' — which, suddenly and mysteriously, are now not the cops but the bad guys — view, causing them to go over the cliffs.

Helm and A-M find a speedboat. They dock and make out, then he goes to shore in search of Malden's lair. A-M secretly follows him. They each find Solaris at the same time. We have been spared any talk about the Super Helio-Beam since the beginning of the movie, but we fear that won't last much longer. Solaris is being kept in some sort of Michael Jackson-like suspended animation machine, and his state of near-death prompts Helm to impart a morsel of philosophical insight to A-M: "Just remember, Suzie, nobody dies for nothing. Not me, not your father — nobody." But from that height the banter sinks to a new low, as Malden sneers, "In a little while Washington traffic will be at its height. Operation Scorch will kill a great many people." He turns to Helm and continues: "Oh, we call it Operation Scorch." Helm: "Catchy title." All the acting, in this pivotal scene and for that matter throughout the movie, appears to have been done in one take.

Eightball has Helm inside one of the giant smelting tubes set up on the shore. We feel a strong urge to rub his head and predict the future. "Eightball, should we continue watching this movie? Does it get any better?" "Sorry, try again." The tubes look like the cover of the X-Ray Spex album. Helm's tube is turned on and thrusts him up and down a few times. What's it supposed to do, make him nauseous? There are five of these tubes, which prompts us to wish the director had put Frank, Sammy, Peter Lawford and Joey Bishop inside the others.

Meanwhile, A-M is tortured while Solaris is forced to watch, so he relents and shows Malden how to run the Super Helio-Beam. They let A-M go. She wanders outdoors and tosses a bobby pin inside the motor that drives the tube machine, which blows it up and frees Helm. Eightball chases Helm, they duke it out on a coal mound. The fight scene features several excellent boot-heel kicks to the chin, my favorite fight scene maneuver. A-M turns on a supermagnet, which picks Eightball up by the cranium, looking just like the old Krazy Glue commercial. Two guards kill each other with rifles that this time fire sideways, as the Matt Helm creative team continues in its relentless search to scope out all possible variations of this timeless bit of bizness; alas, there are only so many firing angles left for them to explore. Malden disappears into a weird wheelchair-under-the-podium device, then escapes via Jabba the Hoverthing. Still more guards are killed with the sideways gun.

A-M commandeers the sleek, modern hydrafoil which had been sitting idly on shore apparently unnoticed and unused through the entire movie. Of course, she already knew how to drive it. She and Helm make their

getaway. A terraplane war ensues, speedier though not quite as epic as the battle of the Monitor and Merrimack. Helm and A-M board Jabba. Helm kills Malden with the sideways gun. The scene is so anticlimactic and the plot so nowhere that they could have easily done away with the interior two-thirds of the film to get to this point and have missed nothing, save for A-M's fabulous dance routines. Forgotten completely from the opening scenes, for instance, is the fact that Helm is supposedly dead, and nobody ever shed a single tear over poor Miss Minnesota/January when she blew up with him.

Malden's actorly dying line: "Clever." Helm's resounding retort: "If you say so." He scratches his nose smugly. He and A-M dive into the ocean as Jabba explodes. They are rescued by an ICE helicopter, and there is a gag about Helm's polka-dotted underwear. Helm and A-M are back at his boss pad, climbing into the round bed. An invisible Dino sings "Not The Marrying Kind." They roll towards, then are dumped into the pool. We had no idea this was coming. This time, however, the water is blood-red. Helm's Calendar Girls appear in bikinis to congratulate him, but Miss December pulls out an automatic rifle. "This is an ambush, let's get outta here," Helm yells. Credits roll, starting with: "Coming Up Next: *The Ambushers*."

Scott concludes our viewing of *Murderer's Row* by observing, "Well, that was exciting. Wish we could remember any of it."

The Ambushers (1968)

The best title sequence of the lot. Kicky Boyce & Hart song, lots of swingin' '60s chicks in mod Carnaby outfits and teeny-weensy bikinis, plenty of color and action. The film proper opens with a flying saucer landing in a forest clearing. The effects are just slightly north of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. The saucer is an ICE vehicle, but the landing has been co-opted by the enemy. It should go without saying that the future security of the world somehow depends on this.

We cut to the campus of the ICE Rehabilitation Center, with our hero seen ambling down the sidewalk. A white-haired, death-palored Goth-rocker comes rushing up to Helm. She is wearing a straightjacket, and seeks Helm's aid, but she is caught and led away by the authorities before Helm can do anything. A girl in a tam o'shanter and skimpy costume rides up to Helm on a motorscooter. Even though he is just ambling along, minding his own business, Helm cannot help but be the center of all attention. The girl has been assigned to bring Matt back to headquarters. "Better find something to hang onto," she tells him, "I go plenty fast." Helm leers at the camera, shrugs, replies "Crazy," then grabs her tits. They ride off.

Helm takes a call from James Gregory. "When do I get out of here?," Helm asks. "Every girl here is built like the Aberdeen Proving Grounds." His French fencing instructor enters the room, prompting more half-entendres and, inexplicably, a Connecticut joke, perhaps left over from the early, U.S. states version of the last movie. Cut to the obligatory bitchy gay hairdresser, who's been assigned by ICE to make over the Goth chick: "We want her to feel like a beautiful young woman again." "Have you tried prayer?" Straining our now-precarious patience, the writers attempt to milk still more mileage out of the name Lovey Kravezit. "Lovey Kravezit?!", says guard #1, incredulously, to which guard #2 replies, "What would *you* call her?" Silent rim-shot. The lines are so natural they seem to have almost written themselves.

Matt gets a massage from a buxom blonde. More half-entendres, none worth repeating. These jokes are all at the level a nine-year might enjoy, except that they are all vaguely smutty, so who were they written for? Perhaps 40-year-olds with nine-year-old mentalities.

Helm and Lovey meet in the steam room. She's got a tape recorder hidden in her bra, with a message from headquarters for Helm. "Hmm, Candid Brassiere." He and Lovey make out. A loudspeaker in the steam room announces, "Mr. Helm, it's time for your physical." He answers to the wall, "I'm way ahead of ya."

A training session takes place in a railroad car, which passes through

an almost Freudian number of tunnels. This leads to an inscrutable gag concerning a lesson about "uncovering a secret agent." The lights go out, and when they go back on again the one foxy agent is in her undies. Helm explains, "The man said to uncover the secret agent." The ineptitude of the staging of this scene makes the gag much less clear than it reads on paper, and even less funny, if you can believe that.

An even more ponderous gag follows, as Gregory asks, "Matt, have you ever seen a flying saucer?" Helm answers, "Is that your way of offering me a drink?" Helm is assigned to probe the dissipated mind of Janice Rule, to find out what became of the ICE flying saucer that she piloted, but returned to earth without. Flashing back to a prior assignment, Rule thinks Helm is her husband. Meanwhile, a popular Mexican tune, used for a beer commercial there, is believed to contain secret coded tones that pass messages to foreign underworld figures, or turn Mexican citizens into zombies, or do something bad. The ICE head off again to Mexico to ferret out the dastardly plot.

Helm and Rule, the latter in a striking white minidress, go to the headquarters of the beer corporation, under Matt's standard ruse of doing a photo layout. There is a weird bit where the secretary recognizes Helm as the internationally renowned cheesecake shutterbug that he is, and undulates and quivers before him. When he innocuously suggests that she pose for him, she just says "No," curtly, and walks back behind her desk. Helm and Rule tour the beer factory. Rule is expected to subliminally recognize the nasty crook who stole her spaceship, but the bad guys recognize her before she does them. The chief bad guy is played by Albert Salmi, resplendent here in a Van Dyke beard, tinted eyeglasses and a Beatle haircut.

There is an outdoor party, with a mariachi band. The percussionist holds his maracas steady in front of his chest while the camera focuses in on them to make a tit pun. A fight breaks out at the party. Helm and Rule run for the parking lot. She gets away in a black Continental. Six waiters begin to attack Helm, but he has a secret weapon, a laser ray that makes their pants fall down. They continue to waddle toward him, but the band strikes up the Mexican national anthem and they reflexively stand at attention, their pants around their ankles, allowing Helm to make his getaway on a stolen motorcycle.

Janice Rule gets kidnapped by a guy in her car, who tries to rape her. She kills him, then creates an absurdly avant-garde new outfit by turning her dress inside-out to hide her near-naked form. Helm goes to the villa of Senta Berger, a German chiclet he met at the party. Another glamorous set design, another round bed, another Sinatra gag. The two reveal plot points to each other. She kisses him with mickey-drenched lipstick and he goes woozy, yet still manages to rip off her dress — she is a redhead, after all — and have a one-second hallucination before collapsing on her round bed. The hallucination looks like something out of an episode of *SCTV*, "Dr. Shock's 3-D House Of Redheaded Double-Agents." While Helm is passed out on the bed, Berger seductively strokes his chest with her ultralong red Lee press-on nails. This is, so far, the only even remotely erotic instant in the entire series. Rule destroys the mood by bursting in on them, and forces the enemy babe to give Helm the antidote. He comes to instantly. They all exchange more plot points, and agree to collaborate.

Helm and Rule drive off somewhere, and they pull off the road to spend the night. He may be America's toughest secret agent, practically a man of steel, but he's still incapable of driving more than a few hours without having to take a nap. As usual, he's got a luxury bachelor pad in the car. This time it's an inflatable one that's stashed in the trunk. He pulls a lever and a huge plastic hut inflates itself in the woods. As soon as it does, the objects inside (a bed — round, of course — a lamp, chairs, refrigerator, etc.) are no longer inflatable plastic but solid plastic. Cute trick, and an amusing scene. Rule gets off a good line, an inside joke to Matt Helm fans: "If that bed tilts up and I fall in the pool, I'm leaving." They fuck.

Wearing sombreros and serapes (Helm, of course, wears his serape over his standard-issue turtleneck), they sneak into the beer factory. There is a shootout in the vat room. A stray bullet pierces a pipe, unleashing a stream of beer. Helm, under heavy fire, stops what he's doing and takes a drink from the leaking pipe. This is one of the few scenes any of us recall from

watching these films as kids, but seeing it now it's difficult to understand how even as nine-year-olds we were so easily impressed by it. It's barely worth a titter to us today.

Helm gets shot and falls into a vat of beer. A crook is already in there, screaming "Help, I'm drowning." Helm's form of rescue is to advise his fellow man to "drink yourself to the bottom." The beer looks more like foamy green water. There is a nice sequence with Rule, in another fetching white mini, rolling around on the concrete floor as a stream of beer splashes across it. Helm and the bad guy duke it out atop the roof of the beer factory. Helm almost drowns in a trough of the foamy green water, but instead he pulls the bad guy by the hair into it and the latter gets sucked down a chute, up a tube, into a giant beer mug display, then falls 25 stories onto the street. Helm's big line after his battle to the death: "Olé!"

Senta Berger and Janice Rule have a battle of the smashing dresses. Berger's is a paisley body-dress, but Rule has her down for a two-count in a mini that splits pink and red along a vertical axis. They and Helm descend upon Albert Salmi's desert compound, where they believe the flying saucer is stashed. Rule and Helm are caught by a guy in sunglasses and a red fez — do fezzes come in any other color? — and are taken to Salmi. Berger is already there. It turns out she is a member of Big O, and quickly comes back to pin Rule by changing into a low-cut green paisley dress. Salmi shoots a poster of a nude woman in his lair. Helm's an art critic: "You made a Picasso out of it." We learn that Big O stands for the Bureau of International Government and Order. Always making with the clever acronyms, these international terrorist cartels.

Salmi has made a deal with an Oriental gentleman, "whose name I can't pronounce," to buy the saucer for "one hundred million American dollars. Who'd have ever thought that the first man on the moon would be eating won ton?" Salmi has a laser gun that causes Scotch — Ballantine's — to pour and deliver itself, but it takes about ten minutes just to get a couple of glasses. Salmi sentences Helm to die at dawn by firing squad. The man in the red fez is led out of the compound, but he manages to strangle his guard with a rope concealed in the fez. Berger also kills her guard. They both race for the saucer. Fezman kills Berger and dumps her body by the side of the launching pad. As she is one of the top-billed stars in this pic, the cavalier manner in which Senta Berger is done away with and summarily forgotten is strange, though typical. Fezman climbs into the saucer, then the saucer turns a bright glowing red. We hear weird theremin noises, then he screams. He crawls out, glowing a bright red himself, then runs away.

Helm has a brilliant plan to thwart his execution. He asks for a last cigarette, which he somehow finagles to be a marijuana joint (referred to here as a "Mexican cigarette"). Dino throws in a bizarre gag about Steubenville, Ohio, his hometown, comparing it unfavorably to Satan's fiery haunting ground. He shotguns the joint, and it must have been one mighty spliff because the entire firing squad gets immediately stoned and collapse in an hysterical laughing jag as Helm makes his getaway.

Salmi has Rule in his bedroom. He strips her down with his ray gun to a tiny red negligee as he pumps her for information. She's kinda scrawny, but at least she's not related to Kate Jackson. She plays along with his advances until she can make a run for the saucer, with Salmi hot on her tail. Aboard the spaceship, she again pretends to play along with him until she can flick the switch that will radiate him to his red glowing death. She starts the saucer down its launching strip, which looks just like an ordinary railroad track. Helm has some fun aboard an Alpine-slide car speeding down the same track, until he chances upon a stray Harley, with a sidecar. He chases down the tracks after Rule. Rule strips naked in the saucer. Helm takes a shortcut across a pond. An alligator climbs into the sidecar, prompting a completely nothing joke. Helm loses the sidecar. We debate why it was even there in the first place: so they could get in the alligator, or so they could get in the joke?

Rule jumps out of the saucer and onto the flatbed railroad car that is carrying it. Helm, still on the Harley, catches up to her. He uses a spare ray gun to elevate her above the railroad car and onto the back of his bike, which leads up to the boffo gag, "Let Helm put you in the driver's seat." It's a throwaway line, yet for reasons known only to the inscrutable Dino he puts more life into it than any other in the entire picture. The scene as a whole is absolutely preposterous, made even more so as Helm's shots had mostly been in rear-screen projection, yet Rule's were full live-action (using the word "action" quite liberally). For the shots of Rule aloft, the director suddenly had to switch back to rear-screen projection, and the jerky transition looks like something out of *Fireball X-15*.

Just as Rule lands on Helm's Harley, the flatbed-with-saucer reaches the end of a cliff and smashes into the rocky surf below. Good job, Matt, thanks for rescuing that multi-million dollar piece of government property!

The denouement does not involve Rule but rather a new blonde agent in a blue baby-doll nightie. Helm is to train her, which leads to yet another tiresome Sinatra/Dino gag, this time a reverse of the others in that she can't get into the mood for lovin' (of course lovin' is part of the training) to "Everybody Loves Somebody," but as soon as he puts on "Strangers In The Night" her lips go ballistic. Helm: "You really like Perry Como that much?" Credits roll.

Wish we could say the same for ourselves. This one has to be the lowest of the low, for not only are there none of the splendid surreal song-visions, but Dino doesn't even get to do one of his el-stupido ventriloquised song parodies. If we'd paid to see this in a theatre, we would want our money back. In fact, we try to imagine watching these movies in a theatre, with no other distractions to hold our interest. Perhaps in a theatre the film would take over — its plodding, ham-fisted dullness might beat you into submission until you are part of its world.



The Wrecking Crew (1968)

We polish off the last of the deli platter. It is now only 7:30 p.m., but we thought it was 10:00 — that's how slow these movies are. This one might be more like it, however, because although the credits sequence is unexceptional it does start off with a great theme song, "The House Of 7 Joys," co-written by Frank DeVol (Happy Kyne from *Fernwood 2-Night*). The singing group sounds like The Mamas & The Papas — well, maybe Spanky & Our Gang — and the lyrics jokingly comment on the film that is about to roll, ending with a repeating tagline of "Ah-so, ah-so." A title card bluntly informs us we are in "Denmark Now!!," as we watch a freight train barrel down the tracks amidst a bucolic landscape setting. Aboard the train, some men are playing penny-ante poker as they guard \$1 billion in gold bullion. Perhaps this irony is meant as a Marxist critique of the exploitation of the working classes; perhaps not. The train is hijacked by some

dangerous hombres, making this the only one of the four movies where the title actually almost means something.

New title card: "Somewhere in Washington ... Now!" A limo drives by the Washington Monument, but nothing happens before we see our next title card: "Somewhere in the United States ... Now!" Our introduction to Matt Helm is spectacular — still making with the turtleneck, he is lying on a couch on a beautiful estate lawn, surrounded by a half-dozen gorgeous women in costumes that appear to be designed by Salvador Dali in collaboration with Dr. Seuss. He is having one of his patented hallucination singing sequences. He sings "Red Sails In The Sunset" to a girl in a black vinyl bikini, with a telephone receiver attached to her bra (mouthpiece on one breast, earpiece on the other) and the body of the phone attached to her crotch; the cord crosses her waist. "Red sails in the sunset / way out in the west / they named you Long Distance / 'cause your switchboard's the best." When he sang the same tune to Stella Stevens she was wearing red, so at least then the song choice made some sense!

The next girl is wearing an outfit that would be more at home in *The 5000 Fingers Of Dr. T*: a tight red and silver spangled two-piece with a glittery silver headpiece — which resembles an upside-down urn — with a big flame coming out the top of it. Helm lights his cigarette on the flaming urn and sings, "Oh, how we'll dance / on the night that we're wed / we'll have to keep dancin' / or you'll burn up our bed." There's yet another girl, wearing a glittery, quasi-milkmaid kind of thing with a big white sunbonnet and a French-maid uniform tail: "Grab your coat, get your pail / let me take you in the barn, dear / just sit back and watch / 'cause I've found that cows'll give Scotch." (Even at four lines long, Helm's song parodies can't maintain the rhyme schemes of the originals.) We wonder if Helm uses his dreams to conjure up imaginative photo layouts.

There is a new MacDonald. James Gregory has wisely bailed out, leaving us with John Larch, who is just as crabby but not as much fun. He drives out to talk to Helm instead of calling him, which is unfortunate because we were hoping to see if the telephone costume actually works.

Our villain, the mastermind of the gold hijacking, is an Englishman who the producers have probably hired because they couldn't afford Christopher Lee. He pronounces the word "schedule" as "shed-yule," which must have tickled the writers because he have him say it in nearly every other scene.

We now go to a nightclub scene. Tina Louise is a redheaded gypsy, dancing onstage with a leopard-skin tambourine that Poison Ivy of the Cramps would just die for. We are told that Tina used to be the moll of the fake Christopher Lee, until she was supplanted by Elke Sommer.

Matt is receiving some of his instructions via a closed-circuit TV broadcast from the Oval Room of the White House. We see the back of the head of a fake LBJ, as his chief of staff addresses the camera. He asks, "Is there anything else, Mr. President?," and in a sub-Fred Travalena imitation of LBJ's thick Texan accent Mr. President replies, "No, that is all." The use of this fake LBJ is so utterly gratuitous and adds so little to anything that we can't figure out why they would even bother. It carries the same net effect as the alligator and the sidecar.

ICE gives Matt a completely stupid-looking gadget, a camera that shoots out a bright green knockout gas, plus a hanky-grenade. Big fucking deal! You can pick up these same toys at any mall in the country. Why won't they give him any cool gadgets? Could it be because, rather than their #1 agent, ICE knows that Helm is a complete doof, and is thoroughly expendable? It really wouldn't affect the national security one iota if he got killed.

We are briefly introduced to Nancy Kwan, who plays an enemy operative named Wen Yu-Rang. (Why does the Helm series constantly target Orientals as figures of ridicule? Is it meant as some sort of veiled Vietnam reference?) Helm checks into his hotel in

Copenhagen. Sharon Tate, as an American working for the Danish tourist bureau, arrives to greet him, but as with Stevens in *The Silencers* she is a clumsy bumbling oaf, and Helm wants nothing to do with her. She looks dowdy with big ugly glasses, a pillbox hat and a dumb red wig, but she does manage to flash a bit of panty in her first pratfall, stumbling over Helm's luggage.

Helm goes to Tina Louise's room, which looks like it was decorated by Helen Gurley Brown. It is a spectacular, ultra-feminine fuck-parlor, with, of course, a gigantic round bed. Helm sings one of his off-screen Dino parodies to her. She too starts out bathed in marabou, though in her brief scene she changes clothes about five times. Her final get-up is the most eye-popping, a black see-through nightie, and we study the footage frame-by-frame, as if it were the Zapruder film, to see if she is really nude under it. Alas, she's wearing a flesh-colored body stocking — either that, or she has no nipples. No matter, 'cause she is soon blown up by a booby-trapped bottle of Scotch — Ballantine's — just before she can reveal to Helm the plan of Operation Rainbow, the billion-dollar heist of the gold-train masterminded by the fake Christopher Lee. Helm's touching response to her demise: "Where's the bottle?"

There is more business with Sharon Tate, who tries to get Helm out of Dutch with the Danish cops, who have implicated him in the bombing of Tina Louise. The cops speak an accentless American English. Helm and Tate go to the castle headquarters of Operation Rainbow for the requisite photo shoot. Besides saying "shed-yule" many times, the fake Christopher Lee also says things like, "You are interfering with plans as delicately balanced as a Swiss chronometer!"

At the castle, a fight breaks out, which Helm wins by deploying his gas-camera. With green gas clouds wafting amidst the loping punches and weak drop-kicks, the battle scene looks much like those from *Batman*. Helm and Tate disappear in their getaway car, chased by a Rolls-Royce. By the fourth film in the series, they finally got it together in the car department. Helm is driving a gold Continental Mark IV, which, according to *The Millionaire*, is even better than an Astin-Martin. (He should know, he's got one of each.) The Danish hills look suspiciously like Beverly Hills. Trying to lose their pursuers, they stop at a tourist area and get on a tram ride, but Yu-Rang and her gang of Oriental toughs follow them. She hijacks the tram but Helm fights his way out. Dino is starting to look rather long in the tooth by this film, but his fight scenes are not bad. He appears especially limber at karate-type kicks, and in fact we later learn that he was trained for this film by Bruce Lee.

Yu-Rang is in Helm's room. He does his ventriloquist routine: "I know why I've waited / now why I've been blue / prayed each night for a roommate / exactly like you." They are about to make out when Tate saves him from being knifed by Kwan. He is unappreciative, and says to Tate, "Wanna do me a favor? Go play on the freeway ... without a car!" It's the sort of line a nine-year-old might taunt his kid sister with. Big shocker, though — Tate works for ICE. Helm doesn't know it yet, but we bet he's gonna be real sore when he finds out.

Now it's Elke's turn. Another fabulous fuck-palace, another no-lips song by Dino: "If your sweetheart puts a pistol in her bed / you'd do better sleeping with your Uncle Fred." These kind of scenes are filled with only the most obvious treachery, double-crossing and betrayal. By this part of the film, the fake Christopher Lee, Nancy Kwan and Elke Sommer have all tried to bribe Helm into joining Operation Rainbow, but wouldn't it solve so many more problems if they just killed him instead? This time, at least, there is a slight variation, as he pretends to give in to the temptation. There is a fleeting moment just before Elke kisses Helm when she displays a radiant, seemingly real-life smile. This is the closest thing to a moment of genuine emotion in any of the four films, but obviously that's not the point of the series and it's over before it even has a chance to register.

We go to Tate's flat. She lets her hair down and changes into a tight white miniskirt. Dino no-lip-sings to her: "Let me call you sweetheart, I'm in love with you / I haven't seen your face, dear, but your legs will do." She dances around the room suggestively and grinds her fanny into his face. The camera cuts directly from a close-up of Tate's *tuchas* to one of Elke's. We think maybe the gold has been stolen away from the fake Christopher Lee,

but we're not sure. We either missed something, or this movie doesn't make any sense. Even the characters in the film no longer seem to know what's going on.

There is a big rendezvous — pronounced by Elke as “wan-dayvoo” — at The House Of 7 Joys, which is apparently a front for Operation Rainbow. This is never made clear, but we take a safe guess. What is made clear is that this will be the site of a big showdown of all the central characters. The tension is starting to mount ominously. The restaurant has a corner room that turns into one of those amusement park cup-and-saucer rides. The ride goes around a bunch of times, different people get on and off. Elke's henchmen are waiting to blow someone away when the door opens, but — big surprise — it's Elke who gets rubbed out, by her own men, in a gory scene influenced by *Bonnie & Clyde*.

Helm and Tate make their getaway. They pull off the road to spend the night. But she's still bumbling, and accidentally blows up the car. There is a do-it-yourself helicopter kit in the trunk, and they fly to the castle, where there is an interminable showdown. The castle has great rooms, though. They are enormous, with beautiful furniture in lush, garish color combinations.

Tate and Kwan duke it out karate-style. Tate actually seems to know a few moves. For that matter, so does Kwan, or maybe I'm just easily fooled by a couple of kicks and a screaming chop or two. Tate, though, is still bumbling, and nearly blows up Helm. The gold is loaded back onto the railroad cars, with the fake Christopher Lee as the engineer. ICE watches him on a TV monitor. When it is required for the advancement of the so-called plot, anyone in these movies can have a TV monitor revealing anyone else at any time. Helm and Tate get back onto their Heathkit helicopter and land it on the railroad car. They board the train and look for the fake Christopher Lee. Tate, in tight blue capris, stumbles and is suspended over an open trapdoor, which is just an excuse to show her bum for a while. Helm beats up the fake Christopher Lee and tosses him out the trapdoor.

Helm takes over the train controls, and talks to MacDonald, who's still watching on TV. Helm slips and calls him “Max” instead of “Mac,” but they didn't bother with a retake. They don't care, we don't care, and they don't care that we don't care. Nobody gives a fuck. Which makes the Matt Helm movies a perfect reflection of Dean Martin's entire aesthetic.

Helm is still quite annoyed with Tate, but it is clear they are gonna get it on. She comes out of the W.C. wearing a tiny red nightie. There is a red Murphy bed — square, alas — in the headcar. There is a stereo and built-in bar, although we don't see anyone take a drink. In fact, the only bottle Helm got near in the entire movie blew up. For that matter, we've made it through the entire flick without any Sinatra gags, Lovey Kravezit jokes, no automatic tilting beds, and *neither* of the two redheads had any of their garments torn off. What a refreshing break from tradition this movie has been.

Dino makes with the Wayland Flowers & Madame bit, but Tate pulls the emergency brake cord. They go flying towards the camera, a matte shot but a very cool effect. Probably an orgasm metaphor, but we're not really sure. A title card reads, “Don't worry world ... Matt Helm made it ... in time.”

The Ravagers (19-never-never)

There was a fifth Helm title announced, but since the box office receipts for the series were ever-diminishing the world has been spared, and we are left to chew on just these four steaming shit-burgers. The Helm movies are numbingly dull and aching stupid. With few exceptions, they are devoid of wit, imagination, charm, snap, style or pizzazz.

We expected James Bond, but we got something beneath Maxwell

Smart. Helm is nowhere near the ultimate swinger we had remembered him as. He's more like your friend's dad. He doesn't dress very well, he drives a stupid car, he doesn't really know what he's doing, and he's not even



particularly interested in doing it. He never has the right thing to say, but he always thinks he does. Even Jerry Lewis could be more truly suave when he wanted to be. To get the true impact of how cool Matt Helm really is, just remember that his full name is *Matthew Helm*.

Getting *anything* at all out of these movies depends on your prior understanding of Dean Martin's character as a nonchalant and ever-tipsy swinger, a man who golfed and drank and fucked and gambled his way through life, then watched TV. Put someone like James Franciscus in the role and you'd want to kill yourself after ten minutes. We try to figure out who else might be able to make something — *anything* — out of the Helm character, and the best we can come up with is Bob Hope.

So what is the nature of the Helm appeal? *Is* there a Helm appeal? It's certainly not his sterling wit, his brilliant, incisive mind, or his feats of derring-do. He's always late on the scene and last on the draw. He's a cipher — a cipher at the center of a vacuum, in fact — and a dullard, *around* whom exciting things sometimes happen, but then again so is Vanna White. He doesn't even sing in these movies — he just *thinks* songs. So he's a drunken secret agent — ha-ha-fucking-ha.

Watching these movies with 30-plus years of hindsight is an object lesson in expectation and disappointment. Remembered as monumentally cool, seen anew they provide less entertainment value than a leaky faucet. The scenes and characters and even the titles are thoroughly interchangeable, like the pieces in four nearly-identical jigsaw puzzles. We could make just as much sense out of them if we were to edit them down to a single 15-minute highlight tape. Like many *Psychotronic*-type films, these movies seem better when you tell somebody about them than when you actually sit down to watch one.

There is a certain ironic humor to be derived from watching these films, but not in an Ed Wood sort of way. Wood's movies might be technically inept, but at least the best of them display imagination and passion. The Helm series is also at times laughably awful, with its hammy villains and obvious lapses of continuity, but the carelessness with which they were made is mostly just annoying. They operate best if we think of them as '60s period pieces, what with their brief flashes of groovy fashions and decor, swell female pulchritude, occasionally amusing musical numbers and reminders of the good old days when public drunkenness was the object of mirth and not moralizing. But the only truly memorable scenes are Helm's sublime song-visions.

If you must watch these movies at all, try to see them one at a time, preferably with a heavy hand on the fast-forward button. Watching four of them in a row was a mind-draining, sense-numbing experience. They blended one into the other until it was impossible to remember who was in which, which flimsy plot belonged to what girl and which villain. We wasted over seven hours of our lives watching these movies, hours we will never get back again, and our lives were left a little more wretched for having done so. Our ordeal has finally ended, and we have just barely survived it. Our sense of self and of the world at large has been clearly disturbed and permanently scarred by the experience. At least the deli platter was tasty.

Much gratitude is due my colleagues in this soul-sucking orgy, A. Scott Hamrah, Michael Cudahy and Peter Wallace. I have freely plundered their comments to compose this article.

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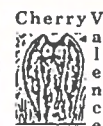


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GOOD RATS: continued from page 63

"I told my wife, 'I'm in!' I couldn't even dream of getting a guy like Morris, the president of Atlantic, on the phone, and now he's calling up my house this is amazing." But it wasn't amazing for long. Morris ultimately decided Peppi was too old and his look wouldn't cut it.

The record was never released, but somehow the tapes went over to CBS. Someone at Epic called Peppi and revealed that he was a Good Rat fan. He set up a showcase. Peppi wasn't gigging with the Good Rats when he was producing Fiona and involved in the "solo-deal," so the showcase couldn't feature the Rats. However, he performed every now and then under a different moniker that would lead to the next bizarre chapter in Ratstory.

"What happened was we did a thing called Pop's a Rocker with me and Gene." Gene Marchello, last seen as a bowl cut coifed adolescent on the *Birth* dust sleeve, was now a hot lickin' axeman in his own right. His Van Halen/Randy Rhodes/Yngwie chops were a marvel to behold, and the novelty of the Father/Son act was a good one, especially considering the regular guy/family man foundation that much of Peppi's work is based upon. When the Epic bigwig came to see Peppi's album performed live, Pop's A Rocker was the band he saw.

"The Rat fan from Epic brought down his boss who looked at me and said the guy's an old guy but the kid's a great looking kid, so he ended up giving Gene the record deal. Had it been a stranger I woulda been like so jealous. I just shrugged my shoulder and said, 'It's my son!'"

Since the Good Rats might be considered fundamentally the work of the sole songwriter Peppi, had his solo album come out it would have essentially been a Good Rats record. But now the exact set of songs he recorded for Atlantic was being re-recorded by Gene with some 80s Heavy Metal polish on it, and production by Peppi. The band's name was Marchello, but if you want to get theoretical about it, it's not far fetched to call it a Good Rats album.

Marchello released *Destiny* (CBS, ZK 45096, 1989) at the decade's end, and it arguably featured the last great Metal album cover; a painting/collage of a half rock-slut/half demon standing on a pedestal in a postmodern post-apocalypse landscape. The only thing missing was an ornate Metal logo, as sadly "Marchello" was spelled out in plain white type. The album was light if you think of it as Metal, but if you consider it as a morphed Rats record it's heavy on guitar wizardry. Though some Ratty absurdity survived ("Heavyweight Champion of Love," "Rock N' Roll Rumble") for the most part this is played straight, delivering a solid slab of rock for the kids. The album was well received by Metal fans who didn't mind some Journey with their Yngwie. "First Love" was the MTV video (and a grass roots hit), and the band got to open for Ozzy, Extreme and others during their run. Though Peppi had pretty much completely crafted the album, Gene was heavily involved in writing the follow up when the Grunge ax fell.

As the 90s bloomed all hair bands were trimmed for the Seattle moaners and Gene got dropped the night the U.S. invaded Iraq. "The second Marchello record we did with Sony, I wrote half, Gene wrote the other half, and they got the guy who did Firehouse to produce it. They spent like \$300,000 dollars on it, and then they bring in a new guy named Griffith to the Epic side and he dropped Gene and 25 other artists. We worked three years of our life on that record, we got a shot with the biggest record company in the world and they rip your soul out, your heart out. It's the nature of the business."

"I just had one of those careers, I'm looking forward to the second half..."

The second half may be well underway as the last few years have been pretty active for the Rats, with none of the Marchello boys needing day jobs. "After the Epic deal I said to Gene, 'Why don't you come and play with me again?' We've been playing ever since, and then Stefan joined the band a number of years ago playing drums. They both lived through the Mickey syndrome. In other words, Miki was playing with me when he was 15 years

old, Gene was playing with me when he was 14 and Stefan joined when he was 15. So it was always my underage brother, underage sons plying with me."

The most significant Rat development since the reformation was the recording and self-releasing a new album, *Tasty Seconds* (Uncle Rat Music, GRTS 0001, 1996). The CD is a great showcase for the talents of Peppi and Gene, and the disc is rounded out with a guest appearance by old Rat Bruce "no hard feelings" Kulick. "Cover of the Night" is a mighty rock anthem, "Thunder Rocks My Soul" is a gruff Blues-er, "Football Madness" is absurd Jock Rock, and "Major Minor Chord" delivers like one of the old time complex Rat-sterpieces. Throughout the album Peppi's rough hewn vocals and (theoretically) commercial songwriting chops are all in full effect, and this is surprisingly potent album.

In 1998 the "original" lineup (Peppi, Mickey, Kottke, Franco and "The Cat") reunited in a Rochester biker bar for a 25th Anniversary show (a bit of "fuzzy math," as the 2000 presidential candidates might say). The rubber rats were flying and the baseball bat air guitar was in full effect.

As the new century dawned they've kept busy with the European release of *Tasty Seconds* (renamed *Cover of Night*, Frontiers/Now & Then FRCD 048, 2000), some new recordings for a new album (including the drinking anthem "Have Another Beer," which has garnered interest from beer companies and for which they shot a video) and some H-A-R-D touring.

"We're the hardest working band. You saw that beat up van out there, we drove 19 hour straight to Nashville, played two shows, somebody says we want you to play, if we can work it out well work it out. We play prisons in Pennsylvania, we did 18 in 22 days. You go in there and most of these guys haven't seen a Rock & Roll band in a long time. It's a tough, tough gig. We're not going to do a lot of Good Rats stuff, though we do the "Beer" song and they love it. We'll do Sabbath, that's what some of them want, but primarily the prisoners are Black, so you're playing for guys that don't like Rock & Roll to begin with. We were walking through a cellblock it looked like the TV show "Oz," and a guy came up to me and said, 'You got nerve coming in here without any women in the band,' because what do you think they're going to be doing that night? We played a girl's prison and I said to the guys, 'How do you like it, you're going to be in their sexual thoughts tonight.' Only the Good Rats would do gigs like this. It's pretty hard for the band members to bitch and moan, though, because two of the guys are still living under my roof."

Even more unusual than a Lockdown Tour is Ratstock. "Because so many of our fans have been around so many years they have children of all ages, guys have been married three times they have two year old sons and thirty year old sons. And they all tell me they play our music and their kids all sing the songs, 'hate your mommies, hate you daddies,' 'Coo Coo Coo Blues,' goofy stuff like that. They'd like to bring the kids to see us but the shows are always in beat up bars, so we decided to do Ratstock, a campsite thing with two day of Rock & Roll. People show up with their families, we had 15 or 16 that came from Michigan last year. For me it's like being a guru, all the kids run up and say, 'There's Peppi, there's Peppi!' because they know my songs. It's a great feeling. Each year it gets bigger and better...this year is Ratstock III. Ratstock is the only place where parents allow their children to sing a song like, 'Mean Motherfucker.' I tell the kids, 'You guys watch the WWF...come up on stage and when I say *Mean Motherfucker* you guys pose like your favorite wrestler.' It's the only time the parents say, 'Go crazy have a good time.' This might be the last Ratstock, though, if this new album takes off."

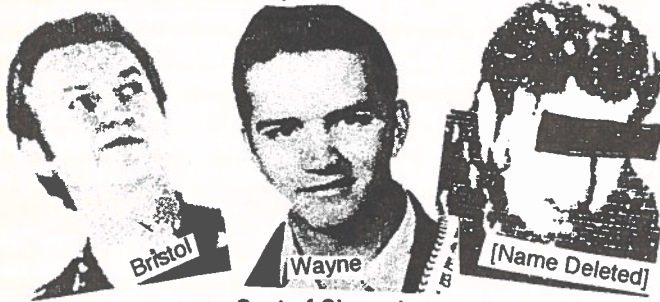
Which brings us back to the High Noon Saloon. In addition to fresh material they've recorded for their new CD, they've also been in the studio re-recording some old hard-rocking tracks, so Peppi has the band "debut" the song "Joey Ferrari" to the crowd. As they rip through the raucous punk portrait I'm overwhelmed with excitement...*I can't believe I'm hearing the Good Rats play "Joey Ferrari!"* (CONCLUDED ON P. 128)

The Continuing Saga Of Dr. Iguana Presents!

The Bobby Wayne Controversy

(Or, How Do You Prove You're Who You Say You Are?)

By Ken Burke



Cast of Characters

Bobby Wayne: AKA Robert Wayne Snyder - Spokane's Original Northwest Rockabilly, his 1956 recording "Sally Ann" b/w "War Paint" is a high-priced collector's item. During the early to mid-60s he recorded a small string of regional hits for famed producer Jerry Dennon (Kingsmen, Ian Whitcomb, Don & The Goodtimes, etc.), who leased them to such big-time labels as Epic, A&M, Warner Bros., and Pye. Wayne contacted me at the behest of noted record collector and Wix Records owner Tommie Wix (see October #21). A raconteur of great Country music stories who does an amazing impression of Freddie Hart, Wayne told me his personal history for publication in *Blue Suede News*. He likes a good argument now and then, but does not suffer fools gladly.

Marc Bristol: The long suffering publisher of *Blue Suede News*, to which this writer is a regular contributor. Bristol is a singer-songwriter in his own right (his new blues disc is out right now) and sees both sides of the coin, but can only be pushed so far. My lengthy interview with Bobby Wayne ran in issues # 49 & 50.

Richard Davis: Currently the personal manager of Little Jimmy Dickens and Ferlin Husky. Davis booked Wayne on many *Grand Ole Opry* touring shows back in the 60s. A man of many connections and tremendous insight, he was my White Knight during this frustrating ordeal.

Ken Burke: That's me. I've been writing for publication steadily since 1985. My mission statement is to get the pioneers of rock'n'roll music to tell their story in their own words before it's too late. My mistake was in thinking I could make any difference with the following character.

[Mr. Name Deleted]: An aggressive, hot-tempered, low-level Florida publisher who felt that Bobby Wayne stole a song idea he had sent for consideration. When he could get no satisfaction from the artist, he attempted to sully Wayne's reputation in the collector press. Though I now find **[Mr. Name Deleted's]** charges amusing, I'm still gripped with enough residual anger enough to not want to give him or his alleged company any publicity whatsoever. I am using the song title in question only because it is important to the story. For the sake of both entertainment and accuracy, I have left all of this person's communications intact, including the spelling.

At Issue: "The Elvis Swivel," a song **[Mr. Name Deleted]** was pitching to Bobby Wayne. Now I should tell you straight off that I have never heard this song and frankly I don't want to. In my opinion, songs about Elvis Presley are generally nothing but cheesy exploitation masquerading as nostalgia. Bobby Wayne says he rejected the song because it was out-of-meter and would've been too much trouble for him to rewrite. I believe him because in our many talks, Wayne has made many critical comments about artists who can't keep time or meter. Instead, Wayne recorded his own song, "The Elvis Twist."

History: Initially, **[Mr. Name Deleted]** wanted Wayne to record "Elvis Swivel" at Wayne's own expense, so he could put it on an English compilation he was making a deal for. At least that's what he told Wayne. "Name Deleted" even went so far as to start distributing fliers with Wayne's picture, praising him as one of the four original rockabillys, and advertised that Bobby Wayne was going to do "Elvis Swivel." When Wayne turned the song down, **[Mr. Name Deleted]** began alternately deriding his talents and pronouncing that his contact in England said he could "sell all the Bobby Wayne records he could get his hands on." Then, he stepped up his attacks once Wayne released "Elvis Twist" on his own Wildfire label. (All of Wayne's CDs are available through HepCat at www.hepcat.com.) Wayne has admitted that he might not have considered writing an "Elvis song" if he hadn't heard "Elvis Swivel," but quickly asserts, "They are two completely different songs and you can't copyright a famous man's name." **[Mr. Name Deleted]** didn't see it that way and got pretty snide about it. Naturally, Wayne did not take these attacks lying down and he threatened to beat up **[Name Deleted]** should he ever see him, and constantly rebutted the Florida man's charges with sharp insults. He probably shouldn't have done this, but the highly affronted Wayne just couldn't resist the opportunity, which is probably why **[Name Deleted]** wouldn't drop the subject.

How I Got Into This.

Once my two-part interview with Wayne ran in *Blue Suede News*, **[Mr. Name Deleted]** called BSN's publisher Marc Bristol early in the morning three times (twice to apologize for calling) and then sent him a fax. **[Mr. Name Deleted's]** first written contact with Bristol came via the following fax on his letterhead.

3-10-2000

Dear Blue Suede News:

I am sure you gathered on the phone that the problem between Bobby Wayne and I is personal, as well as professional. I do not need to read his autobiography, as I wasted countless dollars on phone calls to him, trying to talk business, but had to hear from him how great he was.

I contacted Mr. Wayne in '97 about recording a song in my catalog called the "Elvis Swivel". At first he told me he liked it and wanted to do it. Then started making demands that I could, or would not meet, such as demanding I get the "Jordinares" to do the back-up vocals. Then he began telling me the song was "Out of time", and I would never get a copyright for it, (The song had been copyrighted incidentally, before it was cataloged!) and then he began demanding to talk to the writer. I told him he did not need to talk to the writer, and if the song was as he claimed, "out of time" to put it in time. Finally, by mutual agreement, (and trust me, more ours than his) we agreed to forget the whole project.

Too many things Mr. Wayne kept telling me did not make sense and kept changing, so I did research on my of his background, and I have sent you 2 e-mails received around that time. You may call Warner Brothers as I did and research his "records" there, they have nothing on him!

If it were NOT for the fact Mr. Wayne tried to play me for stupid, I would forget the whole thing, but, not wanting to let him play any one else for stupid, that is why I contacted you. I knew what Mr. Wayne wanted all along when he was demanding to talk to the writer of "Elvis Swivel" and was making his silly excuses as to why. And I was sure of it, when he refused a conference call with the writer and myself and him. There fore, I was not at all surprised when my associate at BMI told me not even a year later that Bobby had cataloged the "Elvis Twist". No, I have not heard this version, but would love too. I have informed Mr. Wayne that if this song is a rip off of ours I will take legal action.

Mr. Wayne claims he was one of the top 3 guitarists, in the same category as the great Roy Clark and Glen Campbell, and better than Chet Atkins is hard for me to believe, why is your magazine so ready too?

I refuse to stoop to name calling, however, the 2 e-mail I am sending you, among other information I have, and based upon my un-plesant experience with Mr. Wayne leads me to close by re-minding you, if it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, I think there is a good chance it is a duck.

Sincerely Yours,

[Mr. Name Deleted]

What a master of logic, eh? **[Mr. Name Deleted]** then sent Bristol two more faxes. One from a Finnish collector obviously given the wrong facts, the other an unsigned message, purporting to be from A&M Records, saying that no information on Bobby Wayne was found in their files. By way of response, Bristol more or less reiterated what he had said in their phone conversation.

3-10-2000

[Deleted],

First off, I can sympathize with your situation, since I'm also a songwriter, and have been in a situation on a much larger scale - a couple writers in Nashville used one line from a song of mine and made another song (repeating the one line over and over until it was more than half the lines in the song) which went #1 on the country charts for 2 or 3 weeks. I did confront them about it, and of course they wouldn't admit to even hearing my song. In the process I found out that it costs \$3000 to get a professional opinion regarding whether there is actually enough similarity between the songs to hold up in court. Then you still have to prove access to your song, which in my case would've been harder than in your case. If the consultant says you have a case, that and a substantial retainer will get your lawyer to represent the case. There would have to be enough money involved (in my situation there would be, but I was unwilling to gamble the \$3000 and of course create a whole bunch of ill will in Nashville over the thing), or no lawyer would touch it.

So, we're not going to run your letter in *Blue Suede News*. Calling me 3 times and faxing me once before I got out of bed would be enough grounds, but we're just not going to help you convict Bobby Wayne in the press with an unsubstantiated claim. Among other things, he's an advertiser, or has been. I do have his CD *Hot Rod Motorcycles*, which has the song "The Elvis Twist" on it, and listened to that this afternoon. If you have a version of your song "The Elvis Swivel" available on a recording we can review for the magazine, I can offer that possibility, but no guarantee we'll review it since we get way more things than we have time and space for. We do often point out the fact when we notice that somebody's "original" song sounds a lot like another we are aware of.

I appreciate that you say you're trying to "protect me" from being played for stupid. But you must have approached Bobby with this song in the first place, feeling at that time that he was an artist you'd like to have do the song. Of course he's a self-promoter, you'd have never heard of him in the first place if he wasn't. Most people don't get a Col. Tom Parker to push them at the public. But it hardly seems at this point that even if "the Elvis Twist" is similar in concept, melody and rhythm to your, that there is going to be enough money to worry over. Yeah, I know in my case it was wo.r.ying that somebody would accuse ME of copying THEIR song later on, if I ever put out a version. Yours too perhaps. I liked my own song better, but can certainly concede that theirs was more commercial, since it did a better job of stroking the female ego, and women buy the greater portion of country records.

Regarding his records on A&M though, there certainly isn't anyone working there now who was there in the mid 60s when a couple of Bobby's tunes were licensed by Jerden to A&M. And that's not anywhere the same as being signed to label either. Can't imagine why

they'd have a record of it at this time, since they never owned it in the first place. Your unsigned e-mail from a Finnish "expert" about rockabilly labels holds no water here either. Lots of guys put out their own records on trumped up labels (in Bobby's case it was a label associated with some little studio in the Spokane area). A number of people find these early rockabilly efforts fascinating. His came out a few days before Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel", with absolutely no promotional budget whatsoever. This makes him one of the earliest rockabilly recording artists up here in the Northwest, perhaps the first.

Your attempt to trash his reputation, as small as his fame is, is understandable, but pretty unsavory. You should order a copy of his CD and find out if the song is really that similar. Then you should think about the fact that most of the really successful artists in the rockabilly field can't sell more than 5000 units. I doubt very seriously Bobby will get anywhere close to that number. If he sold, say 2000 copies (and my guess isn't close to that number either), and you were entitled to 7 cents from each one, that adds up to \$140. That's not enough money to lose sleep over, in my opinion. I understand why you're upset, and possibly you have a right to be. But it isn't news to us, yet. If you take legal action over it and succeed - that would be news.

... Sorry, really I have more sympathy than it must seem.

- Marc

Under ordinary circumstances, Bristol's compassionate, informative response would end this matter. However, sometimes the biggest mistake one can make is to respond kindly to a true obsessive. A few days later, [Name Deleted] sent a handwritten fax that was so badly faded that it is unreadable today. The gist of it was that there are many fakes masquerading as original rock performers and that "If you took Bobby Wayne at his word don't feel bad - you are not the first in the industry to be taken." He signed off asking us to once again prove him wrong.

He followed up with an undated formal protest that boasts better spelling and command of the English language than many of his subsequent messages would.

Editor:

I must take exception to your printing the autobiography of Bobby Wayne. It is not only your job to keep your readers informed and entertained, but your first obligation is to insure the information you are giving them is correct. As you know, I have found many discrepancies in Mr. Wayne's story, and while that does not make it so, it should send a red flag up to you and at least make you want to do a little research yourself, to settle the matter. I almost laughed when I asked for your fax number and you said you didn't like handing it out to record companies. As the owner of [Deleted] records, I am always looking for a plug, but did you really think I would ask you, knowing you simply take a person's word for who and what they are? Just as you are willing to print an autobiography with little or no research, I shudder to think what you would be willing to print about [Deleted] records with no research.

If I am wrong about Mr. Wayne, not only do I offer my most sincere and humble apologies to you, Mr. Wayne himself, and your readers, but, prove me wrong and you may print for your readers a picture of me kissing your ass.

Sincerely Yours,

[Mr. Name Deleted]

[Company Name Deleted]

Right off the bat you can see that [Mr. Name Deleted] was spoiling for a fight. He had not acknowledged any of the points Bristol has made and is fixating on the business about the faxes.

Mind you, I personally had sympathy for [Name Deleted's] search frustrations. When Wayne first told me of all he had done, I too was skeptical. Though I am a lifelong rockabilly collector, I had not heard of Bobby Wayne. Numerous computer-searches and phone calls yielded only that which Wayne himself supplied. BMI doesn't list any of Bobby's songs because they're not earning any money right now. Record labels have changed catalog systems so many times that in some cases it's impossible to find a listing of an item from 30 odd years ago.

How I Substantiated My Story.

I was genuinely wary of presenting a bunch of unsubstantiated stories as facts about the singer-songwriter's career. Finally I was able to contact Jerry Dennon, the head of Jerden Records, who leased Wayne's records to all those different companies. In a phone call to me, Dennon filled in a lot of gaps, confirming nearly everything Wayne had said (he only disputed Wayne's sales figures). Afterwards, I found plenty of proof that Wayne did do what he claimed from various collectors, musicians, and price guides. Three personal acquaintances of mine actually loaned me copies of Wayne's records (the Warner Bros. sides seem to be easiest to find) from the recesses of their collections. Wayne himself made me a cassette tape of many of his singles and I even made him sing to me over the phone so I could match up the voices.

Yet Bristol had the sneaking suspicion that our protagonist didn't want to accept any proof of any kind. A tactic clearly in evidence when [Mr. Name Deleted] fired his first public salvo on the message boards of the Rockabilly Hall Of Fame.

April 1, 2000

Big problem! Ran into Bobby Wayne. Had to listen to him tell me how great he was. Gave me laser printed pictures of labels he was with. The problem? I called A&M, Warner Bros. and Epic, and Disney as he claims he wrote a song for Disney movie. NONE have any record of him having been with them. Could ALL be wrong? [Name & e-mail address deleted.]

If you're a regular visitor to the RHOF website (www.rockabillyhall.com), you probably guessed something was fishy right away. The site contains a full biography on Bobby Wayne, a discography, and several important names and dates. Why didn't he consult (or at least mention) that resource first? Another major problem is that Wayne and [Mr. Name Deleted]

have had all their dealings via the telephone, fax, or U.S. Mail. They've never met, so there was no way he could have run into Bobby Wayne. While attempting to cast shadows on Wayne's veracity, [Mr. Name Deleted] branded himself as a liar pretty early on.

[Mr. Name Deleted] was never able to get a response to his post, because his e-mail address was spelled incorrectly at the end of the message. Whether it was a mistake by RHOF or the sender is not known. However, had [Mr. Name Deleted] simply checked the archived posts, he would have viewed the following.

Posted June 13, 1999

My name is Pat Morris. (adimage@wa.freei.net) I played bass on Bobby Wayne's recordings of "Coffee in the Mornin'" and "Restless River" in 1968. I've got a copy around somewhere. I'm glad to find Robert on the net and still live and kicking. I recorded "Socially Acceptable" and "Face in the Crowd" in 1968 while working with Bobby and Vince at the Roaring 20's. They got played on all the Golden West stations and made top 40 in some local markets. Socially Acceptable was recorded 7 more times by Gene Breeden's artists and groups at Ripcord Records in Vancouver. In 1995 I added a new verse and ten new songs to the album I'm working on. I'd like to get in touch with the old gang.

Eventually, a weary Marc Bristol asked if I'd like to handle this. Almost at the same time, the excellent English writer and researcher Tony Wilkinson (*American Music Magazine*) dealt with [Mr. Name Deleted], telling him that he has many of the singles in question, but Wilkinson's word was not good enough for [Deleted].

In a burst of misplaced ego, I felt that I was now the only one who could put this misunderstanding right. With some general facts and no nonsense professionalism, I thought I could get [Mr. Name Deleted] to see reason. However, I hadn't understood the full nature of his obsession and paranoia need to prove that Bobby Wayne wasn't who he said he was.

I contacted [Name Deleted's] friend and partner (who took no part in [Name Deleted's] shenanigans) after Bobby Wayne sent me the e-mail address he had. I told them both I would answer any questions they had on my article. Below is [Name Deleted's] first communication with yours truly.

Attention Ken Burke:

You told my Partner [The Other Guy] that it was you who did the research on Bobby Wayne, and if there were any further questions to contact you. Well, I am contacting you as there are MANY questions. First, I, like you have seen the pretty laser printed records Mr. Wayne offers as proof he was with these labels, I have made some on my own computer, so those don't amount to a Pinch of shit. I called Epic, and A&M, asked them to research back from 1950-1965, and they have NO records of Bobby Wayne. Warner Brothers, (Time Warner) went back from 1945 to 1965, and NO BOBBY WAYNE. Disney Archives has NO song in it's Archives called "Ballad of the Apoloosa", and NO credits in the movie for Bobby Wayne. I have talked to MANY old timers, including Little Jimmy Dickens, Tommy Rowe, and Gene Summers, and NONE have ever heard of Bobby Wayne. I have found Mr. Wayne to be of questionable ethics, and, if you listen to the song he is always flouting, "SALLY ANNE", is it any wonder it wasn't a hit? It is something an amateur would write, and we both know it.

"WAR PAINT"? A joke. I am by no means a guitar player, but even I picked that song out 2nd time after hearing it. This man claims that song put him in the same category guitar player as Glen Campbell and Roy Clark? I don't think so. On the other hand, though my opinion of Grandpa Wayne is that of a wannabehasbeen, I realize I could be wrong. It is for this reason I am doing my best to find some credibility to his story, but with [The Other Guy] working in Pa, and me in Florida, NEITHER one of us has found any evidence whatsoever to support Wayne's claims. You claim you have? Please send it to me, so that I can apologise to all concerned. I am SURE, you would NEVER print ANYTHING for your readers to read, unless it were true, right? If you have anything to support Mr. Wayne, other than his computer pictures, and memoirs, PLEASE send it to me ASAP. Epic, Warner Brothers, the major labels WERE NOT ROCKABILLY back then, that's my first clue Mr. Wayne may be, shall I say exaggerating. But, if he is not, this will NOT be the first mistake I ever made, and I am willing to admit I made a mistake when it is proven I have done so. So Ken, please help me here, and exonerate Mr. Wayne, yourself, and your paper. This is problem the first and last time I will ask this-Please make me look like a fool.

[Mr. Name Deleted] [Company Name Deleted]

Charming guy, eh? Straight away he attacked my article and Bobby Wayne and demanded "proof," which to him called for us also to mail off our materials and supply him with names and phone numbers.

Well, I probably would've done that if [Mr. Name Deleted] seemed like a decent guy in his right mind. He didn't. In fact, when I shared this problem with Wayne's old label boss Jerry Dennon, he reiterated that he placed Wayne on Warner's, A&M, etc., but asked that he not be bothered with this man. As a result, in my response to [Mr. Name Deleted] I also did not include the name of Gregg Geller, the VP of A&R and head of the catalog division at Warner-Archives (see Roctober #27)." I reasoned, "Why burn a valuable source just to appease a crazy man?"

While I formulated a response, [Mr. Name Deleted] wrote Marc Bristol the following e-mail.

April 1, 2000

I have just sent Dr. Iguana a lengthy message concerning Legend in his own mind Bobby Wayne. If I have wronged Mr. Wayne I will apologise, however it will take more than pictures made on a computer to convince me. As I told your partner, I have a picture of Janet Reno superimposed on a models body, and we both know Janet Reno is one ugly little thing don't we?

An ethical paper is not only willing to stand by what it prints, but is also willing to release it's sources. I challenge you to tell me what research you did to back up Mr. Wayne's many claims. I

will apologise to Mr. Wayne and kiss his guitar and let you print the picture in your paper if you, Grandpa Wayne, or anyone else can prove he is who and what he says he is.

I'm sure A&M records, Warner Brothers, Disney and many others were not researched by were they? Or, maybe they all lied just to me, what do you think? I left a message for Mr. Wayne to call me and we could discuss his letter to me, (You will be getting a copy according to him, and, in my opinion, Mr. Wayne can write a letter as good as a song) and he has not been man enough to call me, even though I told him he could call COLLECT!

So, I ask you tell me your sources, and let me check them myself, or you print a retract! If neither is done, if I have to, I will take out an add in every music paper I see asking you to give me your sources, and asking why you won't!

Boy your readers would love that wouldn't they?

[Mr. Name Deleted]

I hadn't seen the above yet when I was preparing the following statement.

April 4, 2000

[Mr. Name Deleted,]

I am pleased you that you have taken the time to get in touch with me. I will attempt to answer the questions posed in your e-mail.

I cannot answer for all of those labels. Many of them have out-of-date filing systems and utilize staff members too young to remember even the big-name artists. As the computer/catalog age progresses, I'm sure it will be easier to access information such as this if it's not lost or destroyed.

However, the Vice-president of A&R at Warner-Archives confirmed to me that Bobby Wayne's "Half Breed" b/w "The Last Ride" (Warner Bros. 5427) was indeed released by their company in 1963.

Jerden Records confirmed that they leased tracks by Mr. Wayne to all the labels in your inquiry. This confirmation alone should be all you need. Moreover, these recordings will be rereleased in an upcoming retrospective.

Mr. Wayne has provided Xeroxed royalty stubs from the TV program Wonderful World of Disney, which verifies his claim there. The movie that used his song, Run, Appaloosa, Run was leased to Disney by producer Larry Lansburg. Rex Allen sang the song in question. Wayne's songwriting credit runs separate from the name of the man who composed the original score.

Several major record collectors of my acquaintance have these discs you mention plus others from around the world. I have held physical copies of these records in my hands, heard them, returned them, and am satisfied they were recorded by the Bobby Wayne I spoke with for the interview. I also have Xeroxed copies of many of these labels in my own files.

Bob Timmers of the Rockabilly Hall Of Fame web site, owns some of these records, and has in his files Xeroxed copies of published chart listings featuring "Tip Toes," Wayne's first release on A&M. Mr. Timmers, who is a widely respected authority on rockabilly and country music assures me that Wayne is completely credible.

In addition, Gary Bryant, formerly of the Louisiana Hayride and a recording artist in his own right for Decca, Mercury-Starday, and Jerden, spoke to me at length about Wayne's recordings for these labels.

Richard Davis, who booked both Gary Bryant and Bobby Wayne on many a tour during the early 60s, is also the personal manager for Little Jimmy Dickens and Ferlin Husky. Davis told me he booked Wayne on many a show with Dickens, Husky and such greats as Freddie Hart, Hank Snow, Lefty Frizzell, Faron Young, Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright, Skeets McDonald, and Ernest Tubb. Perhaps Mr. Dickens, who is a sprightly eighty years of age, momentarily forgot events which took place nearly forty years ago. I cannot speak to what Mr. Roe or Mr. Summers has told you.

You must remember, the reason Bobby Wayne is such a good story is because he was a reasonably obscure artist primarily known to record collectors. It is entirely likely that many Nashville-based musicians haven't heard his regionally based successes. However, I have spoken with some musicians and industry people who do know and speak well of him.

Your assessment of Wayne's musical abilities has nothing whatsoever to do with ethics. There were more rockabillys that didn't have hit records than did. Finding these artists and learning their stories provides a continual source of pleasure for our readers.

It was in a 1966 Cashbox poll that Wayne was voted "one of the three top most promising guitarists in the USA" along with Glen Campbell and Roy Clark.

Fact checking is something we do as a matter of pleasurable routine. The process is not always perfect, but more often than not we get it right.

I hesitate to speculate on why neither you nor [The Other Guy] could find any evidence of Wayne's career.

As said, I have proven to my satisfaction, the satisfaction of my editor, and our very demanding readers that Bobby Wayne is telling the truth.

Bobby Wayne recorded country and country-crossover type material for the above mentioned labels. Some of these tunes had a Johnny Cash / rockabilly edge to them. As said, these records existed. I have heard them. Regardless of whatever dispute you are engaged in with Mr. Wayne, the facts in my possession clearly demonstrate that Bobby Wayne told me the truth.

[Mr. Name Deleted,] I have been a music journalist for over fifteen years. In that time I have made some mistakes, but none as extreme the one you seem to be suggesting! The fact that you believe I must "exonerate" myself for writing a scrupulously researched article, is something I take as a calculated personal insult. If you or your partner insist upon escalating these baseless attacks I will seek resolution in a court of law.

I have provided the information I said I would provide. At this time, I must insist that you honor your word and apologize to Marc Bristol of Blue Suede News, Bobby Wayne, and me.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Ken Burke

At this juncture I should tell you that I personally made one hell of a mistake in the *Blue Suede News* article. During a story about Freddie Hart, Bobby Wayne mentions that Hart had done a lot of different successful recordings back before he hit it really big with "Easy Lovin'." He reminded me that Hart did a strong version of "The Key's In the Mailbox," and I somehow changed word "did" to "wrote." Wayne himself was the first person to see the error and chastised me, "Everyone knows Harlan Howard wrote that song."

Naturally, [Mr. Name Deleted] wasn't going to give up that easily. He responded quickly, as if I had attacked him first and he had never made any spurious comments.

I'm at a loss. You threaten me with an attorney because I ask you to back up with facts a story you wrote, why? All I ask is that I can verify the facts as you claim you did, and you take offense, why? I do not know how old you are, but not too awful many years ago a woman won a journalists award (comparable to the nobel prize to journalists) for her story on a child addicted to cocaine. Come to find out, she made up the story. That is NOT to say you made up the story that is simply to say that I know just because it is in a paper, magazine, or book, it is not necessarily true for any number of reasons. I'm really sorry you think my asking you to give facts instead of your word is defaming you, as that was not meant at all, but you have taken it that way, and I am sorry, however, my next move is to continue doing what I have been doing, which is to find something concrete on Bobby Wayne, and either kiss his butt as promised if I can find something concrete, or, to make him a laughing stock if I can. You say the record companies have bad book keeping? What about Disney? Do the? When they pulled the credits for the movie up, NO Bobby Wayne. Now how do you suppose they told me all concerned with that movie, yet left him out???? You claim you found something concrete-fine, show me-is that asking too much? I have no intention of slandering, defaming, libeling, or in any way hurting any one concerned, all I want is the truth. Journalist that you claim to be, you should be able to understand that can't you? I do keep an attorney on retainer, I have forwarded him both my mails to you and yours to me, and NO where have I threatened you or harmed you in any way. If you will recall YOU threatened legal action first, just because I asked you to tell me where to find something solid. That is not professional, or even human of you. Why would you want both you and I to spend needless money on Attorneys, and waste time in Court, when all you have to do is as I asked you-tell me where I can find information you printed in a magazine to back up Mr. Wayne's claim. What is so hard about that? You threatened me, and I do not appreciate that. I am doing NOTHING wrong here, except asking you to back up the facts. It's not like your protecting your sources in a murder case or something is it? Sorry you see things as you do, and I'm sorry this got out of hand between you and I, but, I have got to know one way or the other. At least you didn't tell me the person doing the research at Disney is also 80. Believe it or not, I'm on your side. Sorry you don't see it like that. But if you feel threatened that I'm going to continue to dig into this and try to find if in fact you did or did not do your research, contact your attorney now, as I intend to keep going until I find out the truth, plain and simple. You could help me, why won't you? Sorry you feel like you do, you can reach [Alleged Attorney] 24 hours a day, he has an answering service. Hope it doesn't come to that, but I spent ten years in the Marine Corps, highly decorated, (Purple Heart, Silver Star) and NO ONE is going to tell me I cannot look into something and request facts. The constitution gives me that right. If you feel threatened that I am going to keep looking, tell me why. If you have sources that can stop my search tell me now. That is all I ask Sir, Nothing more. If you feel threatened over that, I'm sorry for you friend, you shouldn't. On the other hand, if you're hiding something you should. You claim you researched this story, I have not said anything to the contrary except back it up. If you want to sue me for that, feel free. [Mr. Name Deleted]

Of course by any measure, it is clear that [Mr. Name Deleted] was threatening me. His tactics could be likened to those of a hostile barfly who calls his bartender dirty names and after the man takes offense responds indignantly, "What? What did I say? I just said you were a pig-faced lying sack-of shit motherfucking asshole. I didn't mean anything by it. Hic." Additionally, [Mr. Name Deleted] was also trying to make me feel guilty by mentioning his alleged war record, which means he's a pretty low, manipulative character.

Agitated and barely literate, [Name Deleted] clearly didn't pay attention to any of the solid information I gave him. Instead he got high on the fetid fumes of self-righteous ignorance and dug in for another misguided attack.

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2000 6:45 PM

Subject: Re: Research on Bobby Wayne

Sir: if you would really like to push the issue and think No one can question you, my Attorney's name is [Alleged Attorney]. He is on retainer, and I am sure he can inform you and your Attorney much better than I can about a Journalist suing because he offers NOTHING but his word and is questioned.

You may reach him at [Number deleted]. I expect you to back up your e-mail with (1) Proof, or (2) Your attorney, fair enough? [Mr. Name Deleted]

Naturally, I responded in kind.

"Mr. Name Deleted."

Thank you the information. In the event you defame me or libel me as you have stated is your intention, a representative will be in contact with [Alleged Attorney.]

The next move is yours.

Thank you,

Ken Burke

Was The Author Serious About Going To Court?

Yes. I was advised that if [Mr. Name Deleted] made good on his threat and started buying ads in other publications for the express purpose of bad-mouthing me, it was actionable, especially since he himself had an axe to grind.

The problem, as with all lawsuits, was money, time, and distance. Chances were good that I'd have to get a lawyer conversant in Florida law, have [Name Deleted] found, served with papers, engaged in depositions, the whole thing. Then, I'd run the risk that the alleged ex-Marine wouldn't have anything more to pay off with than a monthly disability check. Still, I was willing to take him to court. I have friends to stay with in Florida and I can write my articles anywhere. I was definitely gearing up for a lawsuit if for no other reason than to have my lawyer ask, [Mr. Name Deleted,] how long have you suffered with diminished mental capacity?"

For the record, anytime a journalist or publication shares a source with a reader it is an entirely voluntary act. It has nothing to do with a preconceived set of journalistic ethics. Had I made copies of my records, it is likely that the duplicitous [Name Deleted] would've said they were faked. Had I sent him my original materials, chances are good that he would have disavowed receiving them and said I faked the registered receipt. I simply did and do not trust him.

I forwarded "Name Deleted's" letters and mine to several editors I know and trust. Their responses were all similar to those of Sue Van Hecke's, my former boss at *Original Cool*, a contributor to *Spin*, *Goldmine*, and *Cream* magazines, and author of the critically acclaimed *Race With The Devil: Gene Vincent's Life In The Fast Lane* (St. Martin's Press).

The guy is obviously nuts. Though you were under no obligation to, you told him how and from where you were able to verify Wayne's claims. That should be it. Done. No more. He can choose to believe or disbelieve - which is his problem, not yours - and he's free to do his own research using the same method/sources you did. I'd ignore this whack-job. As for his threats to run ads in BSN's competition, I doubt those ads would even be accepted by those publications, especially since you have written for most of them.

Jeez, sorry you and so many innocently bystanding others have had to waste such time and energy on this freak...

Van Hecke, currently working on books about the lives of Spade Cooley and Eddie Cochran, hit the nail on the head. I was in the right and I could pretty much count on the support of several publishers, but I just couldn't let go of this idiotic controversy. (Which suggests that part of me may be just as obsessive as "Mr. Name Deleted.")

"Name Deleted" had a boiler in his belly too, as you can tell by his next unsolicited e-mail, which includes a cut & paste of his communication with Nancy Moore at BMI, whom I haven't contacted.

Sir: When I first contacted you about your research on Bobby Wayne (Snyder) you threatened me with legal action, which I took as nothing more than offense and of course forgave you. It has been about two months now, and Mr. Snyder aka bobby Wayne has bombarded me with childish letters, the last of which had to turned over to my Attorney, as Mr. Snyder made it quite plain he intends to slander me in public via the inter-net. Despite me turning over correspondence to him from TWO LABELS that disputed his claim, Mr. Snyder continues to harass me demanding I cease looking into his background, and, while he knows the labels I speak of that have disputed his claims he was ever with them, he has NEVER to my knowledge contacted them and demanded an apology, or any thing else. Therefore I write you. You told me you have 15 years experience as a journalist, and you ASSURED me you would NEVER submit a story that has not been properly researched-therefore it is my opinion the time has come that you either print a retraction on the "Great Bobby Wayne" Legend in his own mind, or that I apologise. Therefore, I am willing to swap with you correspondence from people in the know who have helped me research Mr. Snyder's background, i.e., performers of the day, Major record label denials of his ever have been with them, etc... and you show me all the research you did for your story-and based on what each has, we will then decide if you owe your readers a retraction, or if I owe an apology, fair enough? I have sent such a challenge to your paper, and have received NO reply- I'm sure this was merely an oversight, and not an intentional slam hoping I will go away. I'm willing to bet you and your paper are willing to back up ALL you printed and told your readers was true, correct? So let's do it ok? Hope to hear from you soon. [Mr. Name Deleted]

----- Original Message ----- thought this may interest you "Name Deleted"

From: Moore, Nancy <NMoore@BMI.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2000 3:35 PM

I do find a company affiliated with BMI under the name Bob and Don Music. I do not find a song entitled, "Ballad of Appaloosa". Regarding how you can confirm the legitimacy of his claims, I do not have the answer. If these companies have confirmed they have no record, I would take their word for it.

Thank you,
Nancy Moore

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Saturday, April 01, 2000 9:31 PM

To: nashville@bmi.com

Importance: High

Please help me. I pitched a song to a guy named Bobby Wayne a few years ago-(he's a publisher also, Bob and Don's Music, Spokane Washington). Anyway, this guy was more talk than anything. I checked out some of his references, Warner Brothers, Epic, and A&M, NONE claim they recorded him. I also called Disney Archives, as he claims he wrote a song for a Disney movie, "Ballad of the Appaloosa" and Disney has no credits for either HIM or his song. If a guy is who he says he is, that's fine, but if he's a blow hard, that's another. Is it possible these companies, ALL of them lost their records or something? Any help you can/will give will be

appreciated. Warner Brothers went all the way back to the 40's! I know the guy was with Jerriend records, but, who else? And how come NONE of the record companies know him? Please if you can help, do so this is driving me crazy! By the way, I am [Company Name Deleted] Thank you, ever so much. [Mr. Name Deleted]

This message is intended only for the use of the Addressee and may contain information that is PRIVILEGED and CONFIDENTIAL. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please erase all copies of the message and its attachments and notify us immediately.

Thank you.

Once again, we can see that either through intention or ignorance [Mr. Name Deleted] has supplied a potential helpful source with wrong information by misspelling Bobby Wayne's name, song and previous record label.

Enter Richard Davis

A few words about Richard Davis, personal manager to Little Jimmy Dickens and Ferlin Husky, Opry insider, promoter and renowned private pilot. Davis is one of the coolest guys I've ever spoken to. I called him to ask for Freddie Hart's number just in case I needed some high-powered backup for Bobby Wayne's story. (Davis owns all of Hart's Capitol masters from his big hit period of the 70s.) He gave it to me right away and told me that he had personally been present for some of Wayne's exploits with Lefty Frizzell!

Davis was pretty certain that [Mr. Name Deleted] had not spoken to his client Little Jimmy Dickens, but assured me that "Tater" spoke well of Wayne the previous month. Then Davis told me, "Any time you would like to interview Jimmy Dickens, let me know and I'll set it up." I thanked him and said that I had also always wanted to speak with Ferlin Husky. Well, before you know it, I'm in on a conference call with Ferlin Husky!

FYI, rockabilly legend Billy Lee Riley and the *Louisiana Hayride's* Gary Bryant (now sadly deceased) both told me that Husky was one of the nicest, most talented guys they ever worked with. Not only that he has a good memory - he remembered Bobby Wayne quite well.

Davis observed, "Sounds like this [Mr. Name Deleted] has a real vendetta going against Bobby. If he's not satisfied with your answer, have him call me." When I warned him that [Name Deleted] seemed a bit unbalanced he replied, "Well, so am I. Really, I'm used to dealing with these types." After I faxed him my first response to "Mr. Name Deleted," Davis called me up and firmly told me to give the guy his numbers.

From: <DrIguana@aol.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2000 9:48 PM

[Mr. Name Deleted,]

Please do not send me anymore privileged communications.

Also, would be so kind as to call Richard Davis, the personal manager of Little Jimmy Dickens about Bobby Wayne?

Numbers are as follows. [Numbers deleted for privacy's sake.]

After reading your vitriolic remarks to Marc Bristol, it was my sincere hope that you and I could establish a more reasonable rapport and work together to ease your concerns on the matter of Wayne's history. I'm truly sorry this did not happen, but I will always stand up for myself when I believe I am being severely wronged. Since you and I are at an impasse on this subject, this will be my last communication with you.

Good luck to you, sir.

Sincerely,

Ken Burke

Immediately [Mr. Name Deleted] sent an e-mail gushing with gratitude

Ken Burke: I will call right after sending this. I too am sorry about our relationship. Please understand nothing personal. This whole thing has been upsetting, both because I could get no straight answers, and because of the feud between Wayne and I. While you have NOTHING to do with Wayne and I, the more I dug, the less information I got, and it seemed it was never ending. Now I have somewhere to go, which was what I wanted in the first place. Just as you felt I was questioning your ethics as a writer, I felt I was being shunned in my quest to set this record straight, one way or the other. I hope you understand that. I am strong in my words, and that can be either a blessing or a curse depending. You say not to contact you again, and I will honor that, but I wrote you now to tell you, that just as I said in one response, apologise to all concerned if I am wrong, (and you do not know how that galls me to say that as I write this, knowing I may have to humble myself before Wayne) I apologise to you for any offense I may have given you, and I mean that sincerely. Two things in this life have galled me for years. One is some one claiming to have been in combat when they weren't, and 2 someone claiming to be some one in the business they weren't. I was raised up in this life, go to the Country Music hall of fame, you'll see one of our family there, [Alleged Illustrious Family Member]. Mohammed Ali, when I was growing up, was the best fighter in the world. Yes he had a lot of mouth, but he could back it up. Wayne also a lot of mouth, and if I find he can back it up, I have no choice but to choke and ask his forgiveness. Wayne almost cost me a lot of money, and I question his ethics because I pitched him a song which he was more than happy to record, backed out with asinine excuses, then wrote "Elvis Twist", mine was Elvis Swivel. While no one has a copyright on a name, I believe sometimes what is legally right is morally wrong, and vice-versa. I made this longer than I wanted. Thanks for a place to start looking, and I am truly sorry. If I can help you in any way, PLEASE contact me. Sincerely, [Mr. Name Deleted]

At this point, I was quite willing to accept this as an apology and get on with my life. However, that's not how it turned out. After I received the following, I wondered if either

my previous e-mail had arrived after my message with Richard Davis' numbers, or if Davis had told [Name Deleted] something he didn't want to hear.

Sir: I am at a loss. When I first questioned your research on Bobby Wayne, you told me your credentials as a reporter, demanded I apologise to both Ken Burton and Bobby Wayne, and threatened me with legal action if I ever dare question you again. Now, two months later, I ask that you and I exchange/comapre the research we both have, and rather than defend your so called facts, you ignore my request why? In your magazine you printed that Mr. Wayne recorded for certain record labels, even citing the years. I have in my possession letters written to, and received from certain labels denying this. My correspondence can easily be checked out. Since starting this research I have been bombarded by Mr. Snyder (aka Bobby Wayne) with childish letters, two of which I have had to turn over to my Attorney, as Mr. Snyder made it quite clear he intended to slander me in public, via the inter-net. Mr. Wayne has offered me NO proof, yet in his last letter says, (and I quote) "No matter how much proof I give you you are going to keep this B---S--- going". To dat Mr. Wayne has offered me no proof, and claims all the record companies I have heard from denying his claims are in some kind of conspiracy, or I paid them to say these things-If Mr. Wayne is telling the truth, shouldn't he be contacting the record labels and not me? And you-you bragged to me about your credentials, even going so far as to claim you would seek legal action against me if I ever dared question your research again, trying to give me the impression that reporters for the WASHINGTON POST can be questioned, but NOT a writer for the BLU SUADE NEWS? As a reproter of 15 years as you claimed, you of all people should know! have the right to question the press with no fear of reprisal, no matter how big or small the paper is, and no matter how famos, infamos, or unkown the writer is. Now, I say you should print a retraction, and you say, NOTHING, why? Either you can prove you did your research and did not mislead your readers or you can't. And Sir, I do not mean he said/she said research. I mean solid, research, as I have done, with people in the know putting what they said in writing. Again, I ask you, work with me and get this matter cleared up. Either you print a retraction, or I apologise ok? [Mr. Name Deleted]

The ruefully amusing part here is - I gave him an abundance of sources he could've checked out. He just called the wrong people! Bob Timmers would've vouched for Bobby Wayne. [Name Deleted] could've called Warner-Archives (Gregg Geller laughed when I mentioned he called Time-Warner). And, he could've called Jerden Records - even without Jerry Dennon's name attached to his inquiry. Also, many of Wayne's early records are covered in the *Jerry Osborne Price Guide For Records!* In fact, three "Bobby Wayne's" are listed. One on Mercury during the early 50s, one on Capitol during the late 60s (he was Merle Haggard's guitarist), and the Bobby Wayne in question. Collector and producer Prewitt Rose alerted me to this when I was initially preparing the Wayne article. I went to the reference section of my library and found it myself. [Mr. Name Deleted] could have done that too, but apparently didn't really want to find anything.

Simmering

On advice from friends, family, editors, lawyers, and Richard Davis, I simply waited for [Mr. Name Deleted] to make his move. During this time, I learned three things.

- 1.) Davis informed me that [Name Deleted] never called him.
- 2.) Davis could not find any reference to him in BMI's book of Top 1000 publishers.
- 3.) Bobby Wayne and [Mr. Name Deleted] were still sniping away at each other through the mails.

Bristol and I advised Wayne to just stop responding, but he just couldn't resist. One of the reasons we don't see the Wayne - [Name Deleted] back and forth exchanges here is that Wayne usually wrote his replies on the backs or margins of [Name Deleted's] missives. Wayne read some of these over the phone to me and I can assure you that both parties were making statements that were beyond ugly. This caused Marc Bristol to playfully wonder if Bobby Wayne and [Mr. Name Deleted] was the same person, a notion that I didn't believe, but kept me awake some nights all the same.

The Spokane rockabilly did report one exchange that interested me. He asked why [Deleted] didn't call Richard Davis. Wayne said his reply was "I don't need to call anyone, I know what I heard from my sources." Once again affirming that he wasn't looking for any proof or testimony that didn't jibe with his predisposed attitude.

Finally, one month after he started in on me, I received a final e-mail from "Mr. Name Deleted."

Sir: Just so you know we will be publishing an article in Florida Songwriter that will contain your original e-mail to me threatening me with legal action if I continued to dig at the so-called research you did on Robert Snyder before printing his story, along with correspondence from various record companies you claimed he was with, (who have NO records of him), interviews with people in the know who mke disclaimers about what you printed, Mr. Snyder's childish letter threatening to publicly slander me if I did not cease looking into his carrer, Mr. Snyder's childish letter calling me a Liar, claiming I was never a Marine and won the awards and decorations I did, and his claim I never spoke to people he claims he played with, along with a letter we sent to Mr. Snyder with the phone number and address of the Man he claimed I never spoke to, which Mr. Snyder returned with no comment, my e-mail to you offering to trade what I had learned about this so called "Originator" for your "documented" research, and your refusal to prove what you wrote or to print a retraction. It will be out in 5 weeks, and I will send you at my own expense 3 copies along with an addresss should you wish to defend your actions.
[Mr. Name Deleted]

Truthfully, I was pretty happy with the idea of this whole mess coming out in some magazine. My first letter to "Mr. Name Deleted," if printed in substance, would've been my best

defense. Also, even though the intended audience (which I assumed would be songwriters) would be angry with Bobby Wayne over the "Elvis Swivel/Twist" scenario, writers who were smarter and more resourceful than [Mr. Name Deleted] would prove I was right.

You've Got To Have Friends

Anxious to see what their editorial policy was, I asked Tampa Bay resident Roy Harper to help me track down a copy of the alleged Florida Songwriter. Harper's 'zine *Outer Shell* (now an on-line newsletter), had been carried by dozens of record shops and newsstands throughout Florida. He searched endlessly by phone, car, and through his many contacts in the state. No one had ever heard of the Florida Songwriter.

My own internet searches and personal contacts yielded nothing as well. This didn't necessarily mean that the publication didn't exist, but it raised suspicions to its origins. With the possibility arising that [Mr. Name Deleted] would be starting a newsletter or magazine for the express purpose of slandering me, I called Richard Davis for advice.

Instantly, Davis offered to hook me up with Nashville attorneys who specialized in just this sort of case. Then, Tommie Wix, who is not a rich person, offered to loan me money for attorney fees. Other acquaintances offered to chip in as well. This show of support felt good - damned good!

I took on extra assignments and started checking out places where I could sell my guitars, books, CDs, and records for more cash. I geared up to meet [Mr. Name Deleted] in a court of law and I was champing at the bit to get me some Justice!

So, What Happened?

Nothing.

After five weeks, I called Bobby Wayne to find out if he had received a copy of the alleged Florida Songwriter. He hadn't, but he did receive a phone call from "Mr. Name Deleted," who had actually apologized. Wayne apologized also saying, "Well, maybe I shouldn't have written an Elvis song."

"Deleted" followed up with a fax to Wayne.

Bobby:

I have called you, but there seems to be something missing as I was wrong, so I am sending this to you to admit it in writing.

I NEVER lied to you. The conversations I told you of, and the answers I got back from the various companies were true, what happened, I do not know. When the Library called me, the MAN, Don, slobbered all over himself apologizing. Since Time-Warner has confirmed your side of the story, I have no recourse but to concede your story is true, and I am sorry. You may take this letter and show it to any one you so please. Keep in my Bobby, yes it was personnel, but I would NEVER seek to destroy a person's credibility on rumor, lies, or fiction. I honestly believed you were a name dropper. Now I know you were not, and I apologize sincerely.

Bobby, I am loosing money left and right. If your like me, you don't have to like a man to make money with him, and I have an idea I have been kicking around you may or may not like, let me run it past you.

Let's forget a moment our egos here. I am 43 and a Grandfather, and at if your not, at your age your old enough to be, not glamorous, but a fact. I have been thinking of launching a project, and wonder what you think. A few years ago, I spoke with Tommy Rowe. He told me he has resigned himself to doing SHEILA, DIZZY and all his other hits as people expect it, they do not want to hear his new stuff. You on the other hand, I think could launch new stuff, not being as well known. The fans know your age, or can gessumate it, and who knows, maybe you appeal to the older crowd, the ones who are/can be Grandparents any time.

Keeping the FLAVOR of your music era, but new arrangements and lyrics could be a come back for you. I have a song called LITTLE BOO BOO, which admits you're a Grandfather, but is catchy, and I think appealing. I'll send it to you if you want. You record it, send it to me, Ill slap the "Alleged Label Name" on it and pay for promotions etc., do all I can to make it a go. I think Grandparents are an untapped market. We'll do all work by CONTRACT, which we will work out. Think it over and let me know ok?

Sincerely Yours,

[Mr. Name Deleted]

Did you notice anything missing there? That's right, no mention of an apology to Marc Bristol or myself. I wasn't surprised; [Mr. Name Deleted] has demonstrated repeatedly that he has no true sense of honor, why should this incident prove any different?

For the record, Wayne doesn't want [Name Deleted] to kiss any of his bodily parts and definitely not his guitar.



MONKEY ROCK N ROLL UPDATE

From Andrew Loog Oldham's *Stoned*: "(John Lennon and Paul McCartney joke about) what would happen if the windows of the Phantom V (Rolls-Royce) zooming south suddenly shattered and splintered in their faces, turning them into unacceptably scarred and disfigured mop-tops, unable to carry on as part of the Fab Four now recognised the world over. 'We'd have to put on monkey costumes. We'd be a fucking vaudeville act,' whooped John. 'We'd have to have bear suits or masks...nobody could see us,' Paul harmonised."

More Monkey Bands: Ape Has Killed Ape, Danny Craswell's Ape Show, Gorillaz, Raft of Dead Monkeys,

More Monkey Songs: "Adieu Clo Clo" - Boo Radleys, "The Adventures of Planky" - King Missile, "African Man" - Pop, Iggy, "A Japanese Dream" - Cure, "Alternative Monkey" - Perfect, "Angelina" - Dylan, Bob, "Another Life" - Rollins Band, "Another Moon" - Meat Puppets "At The Zoo" - Simon and Garfunkel, "Back Porch" - Presidents of the United States of America, "Big William" - Swarbrick and Lucas, "Billy Was a Monkey" - Blank, "Blah Blah Blah" - Pop, Iggy and David Bowie, "The Blaydon Races" - Ridley, George, "Bliss" - Tori Amos, "Bob Dylan's New Orleans Rag" - Dylan, Bob, "Bogusflow" - Beck, "Bombay" - Bel Canto, "Buckets of Rain" - Dylan, Bob, "Bungle in the Jungle" - Jethro Tull, "Caterpillar" - Janis Joplin, "Cats on the Rooftops" - John Peel, "Cavern" - Phish, "Cigarettes, Whiskey, and Wild Women" - Tim Spencer, "Coffee Monkey" - Bottlerockets, "Cold Water Coming" - Kristin Hersh, "Come Home" - Placebo, "Come Together" - Beatles, "Crazy Monkey Woman" - Pietasters, "Creatures of Love" - Talking Heads, "Cushie Butterfield" - Ridley, George, "The Darwinian Theory" - John Young, "Death Trap" - Hawkwind, "Different Therefore Equal" - Peggy Seeger, "Dirt Monkey" - Moloko, "Disturbance at the Heron House" - REM, "Don't Bang the Drum" - Waterboys, "Dopehat" - Manson, Marilyn, "Earth Died Screaming" - Waits, Tom, "The Facts of Life" - Talking Heads, "Fat Man and Dancing Girl" - Vega, Suzanne, "Feather Pluckin'" - Presidents of the United States of America, "First We Take Manhattan" - Leonard Cohen, "For Michael Collins, Jeffrey and Me" - Jethro Tull, "Forsythia" - Veruca Salt, "Funky Monkey" - Northside, "Fuzzy Freaky" - David Byrne, "Galaxy of Emptiness" - Beth Orton, "Glitter In Their Eyes" - Patti Smith, "God's Monkey" - David Sylvian/Robert Fripp, "The Gol-Darned Wheel" - Lomax, "Good and Evil (Rumba/Lesla)" - David Byrne, "Gorilla Beat" - Batmobile, "The Greatest Story Ever Told" - Grateful Dead, "Gunshy" - Liz Phair, "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper" - Led Zeppelin, "Hello, Sailor" - Phair, Liz, "High as Monkeys" - The Boo Radleys, "Holy Water" - Soundgarden, "How Lucky You Are" - Bowie, "If I Had \$1000000" - Barenaked Ladies, "I Had A Dream" - Johnston, Daniel, "I'm Gonna Be A Monkey" - Ren and Stimpy, "Irresistible Part Dip" - Tom Tom Club, "I Shall Be Free No.10" - Dylan, Bob, "Jesus Thinks You're a Jerk" - Zappa, "Jet Pilot" - Dylan, Bob, "Jocko Homo" - Devo, "Lament" - Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, "La Rossa" - Van der Graaf Generator, "Let's Have Sex" - King Missile, "Like a Monkey in a Zoo" - Daniel Johnston, "The Lord is a Monkey" - The Butthole Surfers, "Loser" - Beck, "Low Side of the Road" - Waits, Tom, "Lubie (Come Back Home)" - Stevie Wonder, "Lucky Day Overture" - Waits, Tom, "Making Flippy Floppy" - Talking Heads, "Making Love to a Vampire With a Monkey on My Knee" - Captain Beefheart, "Mammal" - They Might Be Giants, "Marianne" - Tori Amos, "Money Makes the Monkey Dance" - Nil Lara, "Monkey" - Bush, "Monkey" - Counting Crows, "Monkey" - Dim Stars, "Monkey and the Engineer" - Grateful Dead, "Monkey Around" - McClintock, Delbert, "Monkey Bars" - Hatch, Concy, "Monkey Bone Walker" - Elastic Purejoy, "Monkey Business" - Skid Row, "Monkey Doin' Woman" - The Screws, "Monkey Doll" - Fuck, "Monkey Doo" - Layabouts, "Monkey Grip Glue" - Bill Wyman, "Monkey in the Moon" - Alphaville, "Monkey in Your Soul" - Steely Dan, "Monkey Man" - Specials, "Monkey Man" - David Byrne, "Monkey Man" - Cheeky Monkey, "Monkey Mind" - Mitchell Froom, "Monkey On a String" - Kinky Machine, "Monkey On My Back" - Triffids, "Monkey On Your Back" - Nova, Aldo, "Monkey River" - Won Ton Ton, "Monkey See Monkey Do" - Wildside, "Monkey See Monkey Do" - Spirit, "The Monkey Song" - Animaniacs, "Monkey Time" - The Tubes, "Monkey Time" - Yellowman, "Monkey Trick" - Jesus Lizard, "Monkey With A Gun" - The Yahoos, "Monkey Wrench" - Foo Fighters, "Monkeys Are Trouble" - Andrew Street/Andy Heyward, "Monkey's Paw" - Anderson, Laurie, "Monkey's Paw" - Smalltown Poets, "Monkey's Uncle" - Mitchell Foreman, "Moonage Daydream" - Bowie, David, "My Eyes" - Anderson, Laurie, "My Monkey" - Marilyn Manson, "Nancy Boy" - Placebo, "Nobody's Fault but Mine" - Led Zeppelin, "Not Your Girlfriend" - Rhatigan, "Nut Monkey" - Skavovio and the Epitones, "On a Foggy Night" - Waits, Tom, "One Monkey Don't Stop No Show" - Big Maybelle, "On the Road Again" - Dylan, Bob, "Organ Grinder" - Moxxy Fruvous, "Palace of the Brine" - Pixies, "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" - James Brown, "Perfect Sense, Part I" - Roger Waters, "Porcelain Monkey" - Warren Zevon, "Promiscuous" - Zappa, "Proudest Monkey" - Dave Matthews Band, "Puberty" - Belly, "Puffy Little Shoes" - Presidents of the United States of America, "Put the Monkey In It" - Priest/Daz, "Riptide" - Lou Reed, "Run Paint Run Run" - Captain Beefheart, "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting" - Elton John, "Shallow Be Thy Game" - Red Hot Chili Peppers, "(She Was A) Hotel Detective" - They Might Be Giants, "Shutterbug" - Veruca Salt, "Sleeping Monkey" - Phish, "The Smartest Monkey" - XTC, "Smoke Blowin' Monkey" - Ape Has Killed Ape, "Space Monkey" - Patti Smith, "Splatter Splatter" - Moxxy Fruvous, "Splinter" - Sneaker Pimps, "Stay Away" - Nirvana, "Steel Monkey" - Jethro Tull, "Sunshine Woman" - Led Zeppelin, "Surface to Air" - Wishbone Ash, "Swamp" - Talking Heads, "Sweat" - Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, "Take a Drink on Me" - New Lost City Ramblers, "Telephone Call From Istanbul" - Waits, Tom, "That's All" - Merle Travis, "Threw It All Away" - moe, "Tin Cup Chimp" - Atlantic Manor, "Total Trash" - Sonic Youth, "Tonight, Tonight, Tonight" - Genesis, "Tweeter and the Monkey Man" - Travelling Wilburys, "Twig" - Presidents of the United States of America, "Unfairground" - Public Image Limited, "Up My Ass" - King Missile, "Ursus' Helmet" - Ape

Has Killed Ape, "Wail" - Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, "The Well-Tempered Monkey" - Six Finger Satellite, "West Country Girl" - Nick Cave, "What God Wants, Part I, III" - Roger Waters, "What Would You Do Say" - Dave Matthews Band, "When The Lights Go Down It's Time To Do The Monkey Dance" - Los Rabbis, "Where the Monkey Meets the Man" - Primitive Radio Gods, "Why Don't You Like Me?" - Zappa, "Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me?" - Blood Hound Gang, "Wild Asses" - Shickele, Peter, "Woman Belly Full O' Hair" - Abrahams, "Y.O.Y." - moe,

ROBOT ROCK N ROLL UPDATE

Thanks Michael Goetz, John Gaffney, Steve Mandich, and more!!!

MORE ROBOT SONGS: "Bionic Revolution" - Urge Overkill, "Dog Eat Robot" - The Meteors (the cryptic lyrics refer to Martians and building obedient robot slaves in your own backyard), "Have you ever seen a robot cry?" - The Blast Rocks!!!, "Mechanical Man" - Devo (Ben Bolt cover), "Mechanical Man" - the Visible Targets, "Robosexual" - Sterling (Not just a robot lust song, but an "out and proud" anthem for fanciers of 'sexy robot girls.' The singers' mom disapproves of his predilection, and there's a reference to 1994 [I guess the song, recorded in 1980, is set then]. The chorus includes the line, "There goes a Robosexual"!!! These guys were the Tom Robinson Band of Robosexual Liberation!), "Robot" - Alicja (a very haunting, human sounding tune... she says, "I'm not needing someone who's bleeding"), "Robot" - Competitor, "The Robot Family" - The Witches, "Robot Man" - Jamie Horton, "Robot Soul" - Floatation Device, "Robots Yes, Androids No" - The Blow Up

BECK has a robot appear in the video for that two turntables and a microphone song for the vocoder bit.

BOSS HOG: This tells about how Boss Hog's bass player first met Jon Spencer: "A German factory worker named Jens Jurgensen was busy building fully functional mechanical arms in the basement of his West Berlin squat. One day, a friend brought over a bootleg tape with Throbbing Gristle on one side and Pussy Galore on the other. Jens was impressed enough by the sound on the tape that when Pussy Galore toured Europe the following winter, he brought one of his mechanical arms to their Berlin show and shook Jon Spencer's hand with it. He told Jon that he planned to be in New York next fall to attend the Pratt Institute of Design, and the two agreed to 'integrate processes,' as Jens puts it."

DAFT PUNK now claim to be robots.

DALEK I LOVE YOU: Late 70s/early 80s brit band Daleks were archfoes of Dr. Who and popularized saying "EXTERMINATE! EXTERMINATE!" in shrill and quavering robotic voice.

DEVO sometimes moved around like robots, as in their "Satisfaction" video.

BRUCE HAACK - Haack not only mastered lo fi, non-electronic robo-vocoder effects on LPs like "Electric Lucifer" (he would do things like place electric shavers on his larynx to get robot vibrations) but he also invented the Dermatron: an electronic instrument where two humans conduct electricity and make tones through contact of skin. If that isn't a hi-point in Cyborg Symphonics I don't know what is?

LOS LOBOS "Colossal Head" record cover has great robo-art.

MEGAMAN - The little blue robot protagonist of a series of Nintendo and Super Nintendo games that all had great music. A few years back there was a cd with various alterna bands playing themes from the games. In Japan he is called RockMan.

JIM NABORS, he of otherworldly vocla prowess, played an outer space android on the Sid and Mrtz Krofft show "Lost Saucer."

LOU REED: The video where Lou Reed rips off his own robot face is "No Money Down" from the LP "Mistrial" (RCA, 1986). Beavis and Butthead thought it was cool.

ROBOT BOB MARLEY: Harlem genius Raven Chanticleer starts his tour of his private African American Wax & History Museum with a Robo Marley. New Yorkers and visitors DON'T MISS THIS PLACE! Appointment only: (212) 678-7818.

CORRECTION: It's "Dark Side of The Moon," not "The Wall" that synchs with Wizard of Oz. Anyone brave enough o figure out what tunes synch with the Tin Woodsman's segments?



The Sammy Show!

BY WHEELZ VON KLAU

ACES, BABE!!

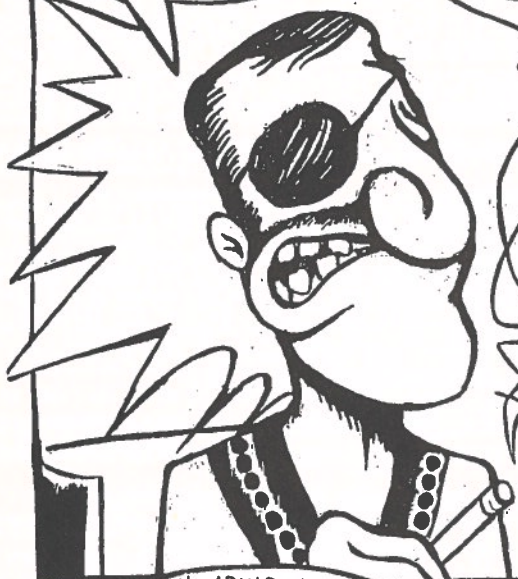
IN "THAT DAMNED SAMMY!"

SHA-TANG! SHA-TANG!

HI CATS!!! MY NEXT GUEST HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS THE ELVIS OF PUNK, AND IT'S SUCH A GREAT PLEASURE TO HAVE HIM ON MY NEW SHOW.....

LADIES + GENTLEMEN MY GOOD FRIEND, DAVE VANIAN, UNDEAD CROONER OF THE DAMNED!! ONE OF MY ALLTIME FAVES!

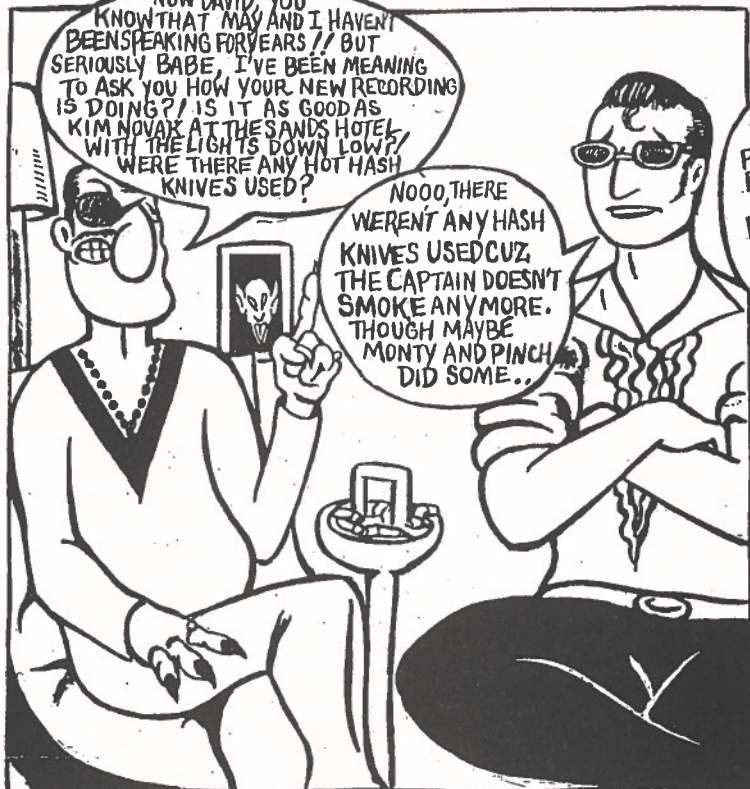
HELLO SAMMY, HOW'S MAY AND THE KIDS?



NOW DAVID, YOU KNOW THAT MAY AND I HAVEN'T BEEN SPEAKING FOR YEARS!! BUT SERIOUSLY BABE, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK YOU HOW YOUR NEW RECORDING IS DOING? IS IT AS GOOD AS KIM NOVAK AT THE SANDS HOTEL WITH THE LIGH IS DOWN LOW? WERE THERE ANY HOT HASH KNIVES USED?

NOOO, THERE WEREN'T ANY HASH KNIVES USED CUZ THE CAPTAIN DOESN'T SMOKE ANYMORE. THOUGH MAYBE MONTY AND PINCH DID SOME...

I THINK THAT NEW LP IS A RETURN TO FORM OF SORTS.... THE BLACK ALBUM AND STRAWBERRIES. IN PARTICULAR IT WILL ALSO BE A REMINDER TO PEOPLE ABOUT JUST HOW AMAZING CAPTAIN'S GUITAR PLAYING IS AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN AS LONG AS WE KEEP HIM FROM SHAGGING ALL THE BIRDS IN LOS ANGELES HE'LL BE IN TOP FORM....





SAMMY DAVIS JR. UPDATE

Thanks Pudgy DeRose, Eric Searleman, Steve Mandich, Jackie Stewart, Mike Goetz

Best Of Sammy Davis Jr. (MCA, 1982) Drawing from his Decca years this UK born LP has some unusual exciting selections, from "Stan' Up An' Fight" to "New York's My Home" to "In A Persian Market." A very impressive package wrapped in a stark, minimal sleeve.

Crazy From The Heat by David Lee Roth (Hyperion, 1997) In this glorious mess of an autobiography Diamond Dave references Sammy twice on one page when discussing his own unsuccessful foray into the Vegas. On the upside he references SDJ as the epitome of Vegas magic, but then immediately invokes Sammy's pegged trousers as examples of things only lovable for kitsch value, far below the genuine level of funny he was shooting for. He missed his target when audiences dislike his appropriation of a Rodney Dangerfield rape/child molestation joke.

Emmy Awards, 1965 - Sammy Davis Jr. was co-host (with Danny Thomas). The show was boycotted by two networks and was called "an embarrassing muddle from beginning to end." I'm not sure why.

The House That Jack Built by Hal Jackson (w/ James Haskins) This book by a legendary Black DJ based in DC and New York for the majority of the 20th century is a fascinating read. Jackson lived a strange, thrilling life, making lots of things happen in radio broadcasting by not only having incredible perseverance, but by being a pioneer in what Janet Jackson's people would call "cross-over." His love of Black culture (from music, to Historically Black College sports to Black teen talent) doesn't stop him from developing a radio format where all hits, white and Black, coexist. Sammy is on the cover with Hal and his wife May Britt (Hal loves photos of himself with celebs, Michael Jackson, Bob Marley, Mick Jagger, Mike Tyson and others all pose with Hal, and somehow don't stare at the strangest toupee ever) but barely appears in the book. On a page of testimonials (an archival page from a Hal tribute dinner in the 60s) Sammy writes, "Right on Hal! Keep on truckin'..." Also, Hal implies at one point that Sammy spent time as the vocalist with Louis Jordan, which is news to me, and I'm pretty sure is incorrect, but who knows? The fact that Jordan's name is misspelled, and that a number of minor errors appear seems to back up my skepticism. Davis worked with Jordan, and maybe was just hanging with him when they visited Hal's show.

In Black and White: Black Cinema (BBC, 1991?) This almost abstract, bizarre, semi-linear survey of early Black cinema ends by dedicating the entire thing to the memory of SDJ, which has nothing to do the previous 91 and a half minutes. But the Brits loved Sammy.

The Negro in the City Gerald Leinwand, General editor (Washington Square Press, 1968) Part of their "Problems Of American Society" series, this book is a compilation of writing on the subject, including pieces by Richard Wright, Du Bois, Malcolm X, Adam Clayton Powell... and even Sammy. A passage from *Yes I Can* describes Sammy's racial woes in the military. After the chapter they have these discussion questions: Why did Sammy feel he always had to fight? Why was Sammy unable to attend any of the army's specialist schools? How might one explain why Sammy had never read a book until he was in the army. The photo in the book is Sammy and Poitier dancing on TV to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Supreme Court desegregation decision.

Richard Pryor "...And It's deep Too! - The Complete Warner Bros. Recordings (1968-1992)" (Rhino/Warner) The biggest photo in the amazing book included in this hefty box set is of Sammy and Richard hugging and laughing. Actually the body of work in this 9 CD collection and the amazing quotes, comments and history in the book don't seem to relate to Sammy's world of entertainment at all. Or do they...? This is a breathtaking collection, everyone should own it if they don't already have every one of the albums. Even if you do, there's a quiet, strange interview bonus track that really brings a lot of questions to mind and there's a 90s stand up routine about MS, so though the bonus material is spare it's important

Sergeants 3 Press Kit - Features great Jack Davis artwork of Sammy and the Rat Pack, and lots of odd ideas for exhibitors to drum up interest (*Sergeant's 3* Indian headdresses to go along with the theme, "Even the Indians Are Funny," on site army recruiting to go along with the cavalry theme, a trampoline to go along with...?) but there's a couple of other features here VERY worth noting. There's a column by Sammy to be submitted to papers, or bought as an ad where he laments how his skills at horse riding and western gunplay go to waste in a film where he rides a mule and carries a bugle. He notes,

however, that he borrowed a hat from John Wayne for the picture. Most interesting though is a Hirschfield illustration that wasn't used in much promo anywhere...I've never seen it outside of this pressbook. It features a bizarre drawing of the Rat Pack fighting Indians, who all have their backs to us so their braids make them look feminine. At first glance it looks like they are dancing and romancing with our boys. That is until you see that Frank has a gun to one of their temples, Lawford has broken a bottle over one of their heads and *Dino is stabbing an 8" inch Bowie knife deep into the ass of an Indian as blood spurts out!* Sammy is seen in the background (a particularly ugly caricature) blowing his horn with a huge spear (not particularly comically) sticking through him. Ouch...on so many levels, "Ouch!"

715 by Hank Aaron - There is no mention of Sammy in this book, but there is an amazing picture of him chilling in the locker room drinking pop with Hank and Ralph Garr.

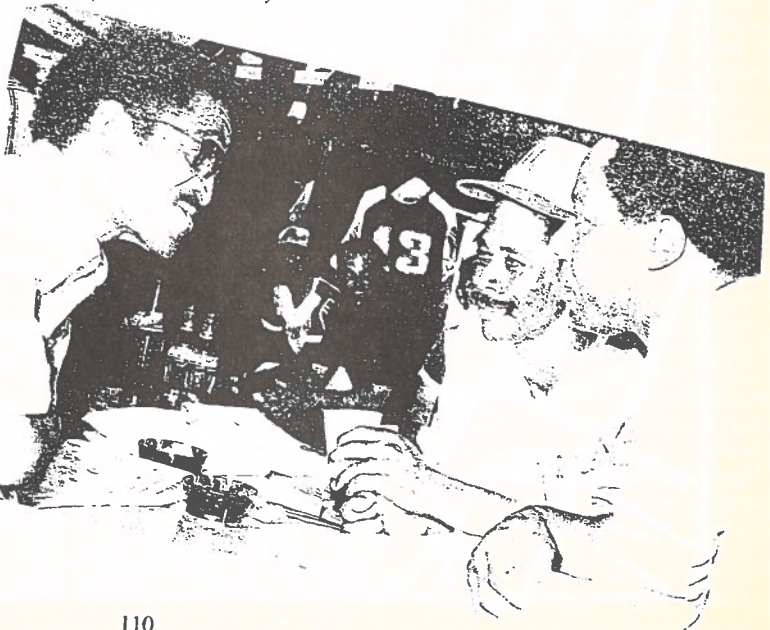
2001 Soul Train Awards -Sammy Davis Jr. Entertainer Of the Year Award winner: Destiny's Child (Syndicated) Child star/Talent show and state fair route is far different than the chitlin'/vaudeville circuit, but I guess they strive for diverse talent, so that makes some sense. However, Sammy was about loyalty, paying and giving the stage to his Uncle and dad longer than anyone else would, and these gals have been far from loyal to their ex-members.

Tonight Show (NBC, August 26 1974) Evel Kneivel appeared to promote the next month's Snake River Canyon jump. Sammy was hosting, and Evel was bumped to second guest for Burt Reynolds. Evel was a hit onstage, but reportedly was pissed off that Reynolds got the one spot.

Tonight Show (NBC, 1983) Veronica Hamel from *Hill Street Blues* was on with SDJ. A steamy clip from the show, with Hamel and her leading man sitting up in bed was shown. Hamel tells him that if he wants to marry her he will have to convert to Judaism, to which he responds, "You mean like that Black entertainer?" Clip ends, camera shoots Sammy at end of couch -head in lap, slapping his knee.

"The Very Rigid Dearch" by Jonathan Safran Foer (*New Yorker* June 18 & 25 2001) In this wonderful story about a reluctant Ukrainian tour guide helping an American Jew try to locate his ancestral village, the guide's grandfather has a demented "seeing "eye" dog named Sammy Davis Jr., Jr. after the old man's bleoved singer. When onformed by the tourist that Davis was a Jew he renames the animal "Dean Martin, Jr.

Wayne Brady Show premiere (ABC, 2001) Brady ended his show with a full length, non ironic tribute/impersonation of Sammy Davis, Jr. By not playing Sammy for laughs, but rather by holding him up as a shining example of old school variety show talent, Brady was positing what he hopes to revive. This show is a really strange throwback to 60s/70s Blacks on TV (Sammy especially) in that he is constantly making jokes for whites about his Blackness (standing next to a white and saying they are related, old time-y chestnuts like using the name Leroy as a punchline.signifier of Blackness...he even ended up with a watermelon on his head in the second episode!). I love his straightforward musical numbers, but his weak comedy needs work.





MASKED ROCK N ROLL UPDATE

Gluey Brothers – This theatrical left coast rock act not only has a mask...it's a gorilla mask!

hawd gankstuh rappers mc's (wid ghatz) – These Hip Hoppaz sport phat, dope mahskz.

BASEBALL ROCK N ROLL UPDATE

From **Catching Dreams** by Frazier "Slow" Robinson (Veteran Negro League catcher): "...I was a little famous...for my singing group that I put together in Cleveland...(w)e sang gospel, that's what we sung. We didn't sing jazz at all. We had six guys and we sang a cappella like Take Six. People couldn't understand how we'd blend our voices like that. We had a great group. Later on we added a little piano backing, and then one of the guys went to guitar school, so we had guitar and piano accompaniment. We were called the Goldentones and sang together from '56 to '66 with five of those years on Cleveland TV. I forgot the name of the TV station, but we had two sponsors, I.G.A. Fox, they sold fox furs, and Shaw's Jewellery. They sponsored us as long as we stayed there. On radio, we were on WJMO, and we did something like two hundred programs for the March of Dimes.

We used to bring all the big groups in to sing, and we'd have a big program. We even brought Mahalia J Jackson to town. She came to the biggest church they had in Cleveland, over on Euclid Avenue, and they had so many people they couldn't get in the door. The Goldentones sang about six or seven songs and then turned it over to Mahalia. She was something to hear. Another singer that we played different churches with was James Cleveland. Oh, we opened for a lot of the big time groups they had at the time (I)ike The Five Blind Boys and The Swan Silvertones..."

Omar Vizquel of the Indians apparently plays rock n roll drums.



Henry Fiat's Open Sore – Bandage wrapped heads hide faces of these garage surf punks.

Kannibal Komix – German early 70s pop with strings and horns, nothing too way out though there's a couple of heavier/more sinister songs and one tune sounds like the Sweet! The front cover has a naked girl (strategic bits covered by long hair) riding a white horse and holding a skull!

The Unknown Comic had an elaborate Vegas act with a be-bagged band called the Brown Baggers and dancers called The Baggettes.



hawd gankstuh rappers mc's (wid ghatz)

"Till The Rivers All Run Dry"

The Don Williams Interview

By Ken Burke



Making hit records is something mellow country singer Don Williams knows all about. The Floydada, Texas native initially hit the charts at Columbia Records as part of the Pozo Seco Singers, an acoustic pop/folk ensemble. At the height of the British Invasion-era, the Pozo's recordings of "Time," "I Can Make It With You," and "Look What You've Done" flirted with the pop Top 40. The band broke up in 1971, with members Lofton Klein and Susan Taylor eventually drifting into obscurity. However, Williams' best days were ahead of him.

Teamed with writer/producer Allen Reynolds (who also masterminded Crystal Gayle's early career) and later Garth Fundis, Williams established a formula that would forever change Country Music's listenership. Blending his quiet, expressive Southern vocals with simple, poignant melodies, he racked up an astounding 45 Top Ten Country hits (17 Number Ones) between 1973 and 1991. Many of his crossover smashes for MCA, Capitol, and RCA expanded Country Music's base into Pop and Adult Contemporary waters, where (for better or worse) it firmly resides today.

At the peak of his early success, Williams appeared in two of Burt Reynolds's feature films, *W.W. and The Dixie Dance Kings* and *Smokey & the Bandit II*. In the former, the movie idol gifted the singer with the hat that eventually became his trademark.

During the early 90s "The Gentle Giant's" run of hits came to an end. Projects for the Giant and American Harvest labels really didn't generate much interest, and health problems kept him from touring extensively.

Returning to the spotlight with his first album in three years (*Don Williams Live, Volume 2 - RMG Records*), the shy 62-year old baritone gabbed about his career and new album via phone from his new label's office in Nashville.

Ken Burke: What were some of your earliest musical influences?

Don Williams: Oh, good grief. As far as what got me started, I can't remember that. I can't remember when I didn't listen to a song and try to figure out what the artist was trying to tell me, and whether I liked a record or not. As far as my early influences, that would be Brook Benton, Perry Como, Johnny Cash, Johnny Horton, and a bit of Elvis. I loved what all those people did. I never tried to emulate anyone, but I don't think that you can really be moved by someone and not be affected.

KB: Tell us about some of your first bands.

DW: Well, to the greatest extent, through junior high and high school, what I had was my rhythm guitar and a bunch of people singing. (Chuckles.) It was just a

vocal group kind of thing. When I got in the Army, I played with other musicians and singers. Then when I got out of the Army, the first thing that I did was a little pop/folk group called the Pozo Seco Singers, which was all acoustic guitars and vocals.

KB: Were Peter, Paul, and Mary the group's chief influence?

DW: There again, all of us really appreciated Peter, Paul, and Mary, and Joan Baez, Collins, and all those people. We didn't really try and copy any one.

Can people still find the records the Pozos cut for Columbia?

Man, I couldn't even tell you. (Laughs gently.) I would say I doubt it, but I don't really know. [Two of their LPs have recently been compiled on a Collector's Choice CD.]

What was your role within the group?

I was the group leader - they elected me to that position. Which meant that I had to take care of all the headaches, you know. I sang a good bit of the lead and Susan Taylor was the other person who sang most of the lead.

Are you still in touch with those folks?

From time to time. I haven't seen the male counterpart, Lofton Klein, in ten years or better. I've seen Susan within the last four or five years.

It's my understanding that the group just dissolved due to lack of success. If they had a string of hit records, do you think you'd still be with them?

I think it's entirely possible. If everybody held everything together - because I've always loved to sing harmony and it didn't work out where I was able to do a lot of that with the group and I can sing none of it now. (Laughs.)

When hard-pressed, how would you describe your sound?

I don't know. I guess the vision that I had for myself was that I really wanted to appeal more to the country fans, but I think a good bit of what I've done is anything but traditional country. It's all really just kind of strange. With the way I see what I do, and every album that I've made, I've hoped I haven't made such a departure that people listening to it would think, "Well, what'd he do that for?" Really, what I've gotten back is that real constant "Don, all this time you haven't changed. Just stay like you are." (Half laughing.) And here I'm just so concerned with every album that I've ever done that I've changed too much or stretched out a little bit too much. When I think of people like Hank Sr., people such as that, I don't feel like I'm anywhere close to that. But, at the same time, when I first started, I had people come up to me and say, "Man, you're the most country thing that's come down the pike since Hank, Sr." So, I really don't know how to answer that. I just do what I do and I try to be as honest about it as I know how to be. The song dictates to me what the treatment is going to be, and I can't go a whole lot further than that.

Do you always try to tap that inner being of country or does it just come out that way?

It's just the way it is. I just do it the way I feel it and it's going to fall where it falls. I can't get into contrivances.

On this new album your voice sounds and expressive as it always has. Was there ever a time in your life when you sang loud and rowdy?

(Laughs.) I guess for loud and rowdy, "Tulsa Time" approaches that as much as anything.

Is that low-key approach the reason why you sound so good today?

I guess. That's not to say that there aren't songs that really tax me when I start getting really, really tired, and I've done too many shows. There are definitely those [songs] that are so rangy that I definitely am taxed, but I've tried not to do things that are so difficult for me that I almost couldn't do it when I recorded.

Is there an example of that?

To the greatest extent that's not the case, but "Lord, I Hope This Day Is Good" is one of 'em, when it comes to that little bridge thing that really gets up pretty high. Sometimes, if I've worked too much and I'm too tired, some of those notes become a little bit hard to hit. By and large, I don't really have any problem.

Did you do any recording after you left the Pozo Seco Singers but before you hooked up with Jack Clement?

No.

What can you tell me about working for Cowboy Jack Clement?

Irony of ironies, I had very little exposure to Jack. My first encounter with Allen Reynolds and Bob McDill was the last single that the Pozos put out. Bob McDill was the writer of it. When I came back and we started working together, I told him he owed me a lot because the last single the Pozos had was a flop. (Laughs.)

I told him, "It was your fault, man." I had had some previous experience with Allen Reynolds and my wife and I moved back to Texas, then we moved back to Nashville, and really all I wanted to do was write and Allen was really the only person that I really knew. So, we got together and he hired me to work in the publishing company. Then things just developed. It got to the point that Allen didn't want to go into the studio on any of the projects he was doing unless I could come in with him and work with him. Then we moved from that to making some demos of a lot of songs that Allen had written and McDill and myself, that I was not able to get people to record. So, we thought, "Well, we'll just go in, get the musicians together that would understand my treatment the best. Worst case scenario, we'll come out with, hopefully, some really good demos that'll help get these songs cut." That first day constituted about 95% of the first album. It was like it was supposed to happen, I guess.

Were there any hard feelings once you had a few successful singles and moved on to Dot?

There weren't really any hard feeling between Jack and myself. I had some hard feelings between Reynolds and myself for several years, but that's all history. Everything's cool with us. We worked through all that.

Eventually you began producing your own records. Is that a satisfying process for you?

It is. But honestly it's not as much fun as working with someone whose company you really enjoy and them as a person and their input – to co-produce with you. In my opinion, that is more fun.

As a producer, how do you balance the needs of country radio with your needs as an artist?

Well, when I was doing it the most, what the label or radio felt about what I was doing honestly was not even a consideration. No kidding. The only consideration that I had was to have the best songs and to do every song like it was going to be the best single on the record. I treated every song with the same respect – I just didn't cut singles.

How does the process work for choosing songs? Do your own skills as a songwriter give you a guide in what to look for in other people's material?

I'm sure it helps me with the understanding of what a really good song is – what it takes to make a really good song. I've been through that process myself so many times trying to finish a song up. I know that this may sound corny, but I truly do have to be among the most blessed people in the world because the writers have been so enthusiastic about me recording their material. Dave Loggins wrote "Good Fire" and I had listened to that song and passed on it for two albums and it's an absolutely incredible song, and it was one of those songs where I felt, "Well, it's too big for me." I kept hoping that somebody else would record it that in my mind has more talent than I do. For two or three albums, we'd get ready to go back into the studio and I'd ask Garth [Fundis], "Has anything happened with 'Good Fire'?" "No." Well, then when we recorded it, I didn't like the way it was coming together so I brought Dave Loggins in and David played all the acoustic guitars and all the harmonies on that record. He told me then, "Don. I'm so happy that you finally cut it, because I wrote this song. I wanted you to record it and if you hadn't recorded it, it would still be on the shelf." When people have that kind of a feeling about what you do, you're definitely blessed.

There seems to be certain themes that run through your hit singles - an aura of romantic discovery, where your on-record persona is surprised that it's capable of love. Is that what you look for in a song?

I love that! I just really do. I guess of all the things I've ever tried to talk about, and especially in my music, after so many years this became a revelation to me like, "Well, I guess this is what I'm doing." I really don't think that there's anything in our lives that have more value than what our attitude is about how we deal with each other. Hopefully, my music helps somebody sometimes with those types of things.

I've read that "I Believe In You" has more words in it that you actually believed in than any other song. How did you stumble across that?

That was a song written by Roger Cook and Sam Hogin.

Didn't you reshape the lyrics in the studio?

Yeah, I did. Roger had written it, and he didn't have it completely finished and gave Garth Fundis what he had at the time. I listened to it and I told Garth instantly, "Man, tell them to get on that and finish it up!" But Roger had some words in it that were a bit more rock'n'rollish that I didn't feel would be that

palatable to my fans. I didn't think they'd understand why I would've said some of those things. So, I changed some of the words so it would fit me better.

Do you remember what some of those changes were?

I don't know – it was just something like "doing drugs," you know what I mean, things like that.

Which didn't play well with you personally?

Right.

You've had so many hit records. Was there a certain point where you looked up and said, "I think I've finally made it?" Or was it a situation where you couldn't believe you had that type of success?

I still don't believe it. I still don't believe that I can go out and do the shows that I do and wherever I go I still have the crowds that I do.

With 52 hit records, obviously you can't do them all every single night. Do you have a revolving playlist that you use – or is it a set list?

It's a bit of both. On average, I play an hour and fifteen or an hour and a half shows. I have five or six songs that I don't leave out because if I do, I'm in trouble, y'know? So then, that'll leave me about eight or ten that I can change around and people are OK. Y'know what I mean, they're not as required.

What are the songs you feel you can't leave the stage without doing?

Oh "Amanda," "You're My Best Friend," – I've tried leaving "Till The Rivers All Run Dry Out" and was chastised over that. "I Believe In You," I usually do "Lord I Hope This Day Is Good" and "I Recall A Gypsy Woman," and "Tulsa Time."

Do audiences still sing along with "Till The Rivers All Run Dry?"

Yeah, but more so with "You're My Best Friend," and a lot of times "Amanda."

What comprises your audience? Are you drawing mostly couples?

Yeah, I've never really noticed anything strong one way of the other, so it must be couples.

After a really amazing string of hit records you semi-retired from country radio during the early 90s. Did you feel that country radio was no longer serving your style?

No, I pretty much dismissed my band and my manager, my road manager and just kind of got away from all of it for about two years. There were a lot of things behind that, one of which was my back was really giving me a hard time at that point. But it didn't have anything to do with radio.

How many gigs a year are you playing these days?

We'll probably come in somewhere between 70 and 80 this year.

Do you prefer the sit-down gigs where you do three or four nights in one area, or is there allure to one-nighters still?

When it's all said and done, I still prefer to move on, as opposed to sit down for three or four nights in one place.

Stage and travelwise, are things easier than they used to be?

Oh yeah! Especially when I very first got started. (Laughs.)

What's the weirdest gig you ever played?

Well, I would want this to go to press because I don't want to give the guy any notoriety. (Laughs.) But, I drove all the way out to New Mexico. I was supposed to do a week's worth of work at this place and I got there, and the guy had not advertised at all. It was just a funky little joint – it was just horrible and the first night we had three or four people there. I told him, "Unless we have more people here tomorrow night, we're going to go on back the house." "Oh, you can't do that!" "Well, then you have more people than this tomorrow night." He didn't, so we just packed it up and came back to the house. That was horrible.

You still draw consistently large crowds wherever you go, don't you?

Oh yeah, well I was then too.

This was during your run of big hits?

Oh yeah.

Wow, he probably didn't advertise at all.

He didn't do nothin'! (Laughs.) I guess he just thought if he paid for me to come out there, he didn't have to say anything, that the word would just spread or something. That was my worst.

Do you still wear the hat that Burt Reynolds gave you?

DW: No. That hat, I retired it several years ago. But the hat that I wear, I've been wearing it for 16 – 17 years, but the old original one I had to retire it. It got stolen; then I got it back. But the people at Stetson out in Missouri told me that, if I would come out there with the original, they'd make one as near as possible to it. So, that's the one I've been wearing for 17 years now.

You know, of all the things we've talked about, the one thing people will remember is the stuff about the hat.

(Laughs heartily.) I know it.

How did you come to sign with RMG?

The gentleman that manages me, got to talking to various people and the gentleman that heads up the label here, when I was with MCA he was a regional sales person. We've going back and forth about what to do and how to do it and what to do what with and everything now for over a year. He really wanted to work with me again and the feeling was mutual.

What's this gentleman's name?

George Collier.

Why a live Greatest Hits disc?

The reason that came to be was because of my fans. I've just had so many fans through out the years that have said that they really did like a lot of the songs the way I did them live, even better than the studio versions. They asked, "Would I ever do a live album?" Because they would love to have that difference and that energy on an album. So, when I felt like I had my band and my technicians together to where I could do it, I did it.

This one's labeled Volume Two. Where was Volume One?

Volume one was released on American Harvest, which immediately went defunct. So, it really hasn't been out enough so that anybody has it to any extent. In working with George and starting this thing out, he really felt it would be better to go ahead with Volume Two because it would be newer, and that was fine.

I noticed that this has the best sound of any live album I've ever heard. How did you accomplish that, was there any studio overdubbing?

No, it's live. It was done by the guy who was working exclusively for me at the time, who was the master engineer at the Sound Emporium; Garth Fundis owns that studio now. But he was on the road with me all the time then, he knew what DAT machines and mikes to put together and how to do the whole thing. That's what I meant about, I had that pressure from my fans to do it. But until I felt confident that I had the people with me that could really do it, I didn't want to do it. His name is David Zinko and he's an incredible engineer.

Where was this recorded?

It was done in three different venues in the U.K. - Wales, London at the Royal Albert, and another venue I can't recall.

You're one of the few country singers who translate well to British audiences, why do you suppose that is?

I don't know, but I go over and do two or three weeks just about every year and they're still just as incredible as they ever were, the fans.

Do they sing along with the songs as well?

Oh yeah!

Is it strange to hear them do that with their English accents?

Sometimes it's absolutely beautiful to hear the difference on how the pronounce some words.

Is the live album a prelude to a studio album of new material?

Y'know, I don't know. George and I have not discussed that at all at this point.

Would you be up for that somewhere down the road?

Yeah. I would be up for it, if I felt like everything was justified.

Are you still listening to songs with the idea that "This would be a good story to tell my listeners?"

I guess I hadn't really thought about it in those terms, but yeah I guess I am. I guess you just always do that.

Are most of your dates going to be taking place this Spring and Summer?

I'll probably work into the first part of December this year. They're wanting me to do a little Christmas tour this year; I've never done that before. I don't know how I feel about it though.

Have you ever done a Christmas album?

No, I haven't.

That seems like a natural for you.

Well, that's what I've been told before. (Laughs.) Hey, who knows?

You have the final word, what would you like to say to your fans about your new disc?

I hope they like it. That's about all I can say.

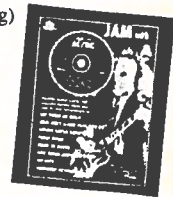
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IT'S A LONG WAY TO THE TOP IF BUH ZOMBIE WANTS TO ROCK&ROLL!

"Play Guitar with AC/DC," "Jam with AC/DC" (Wise Publications www.musicsales.com)

"Bon Fire" and "Classic AC/DC: The Early Years" Guitar Tablature Books (Amsco)

Buh Zombie "Empty Room Full of Blues" (Close Cover Before Striking)



If you look in the entertainment weekly in any major US or European city, you're likely to find listings for "tribute bands". You know what I mean, bands that adopt the look and songs of a particular "artist" or style (the Seattle Grunge Tribute!). And though I have not seen these "tributes" I'm guessing that most of them are humorless, by-the-numbers renditions of the chosen performer's catalog. By nature, these bands try to replicate the songs of their chosen performer exactly as the listener is used to hearing them. Perhaps this is because the fans of the original "artists" might not tolerate any liberties being taken with their "hero's" vision. Or maybe, more precisely, the material just wouldn't stand up to alternate interpretations. (C'mon, you weren't about to bring up Dread Zeppelin were you?) That is unless your source material has been crafted by the band AC/DC.

In recent history, there have been a variations on the "straight" AC/DC tribute band concept. There are a couple all-girl acts (Helles Bells from Seattle, for one). There is a full album plus EP of Bon Scott-era AC/DC songs done in an acoustic/folk style (without irony) by Red House Painter leader Mark Kozelek. Hayseed Dixie did a full album of AC/DC hits *ala* blue grass. And there was the Skin Graft Records 10 band AC/DC tribute project in which it was proven that even soul-less indie bands like Palace Brothers and Mt. Shasta could do AC/DC songs without ruining them.

So what's so special about AC/DC? Certainly this is a question that will be pondered throughout the ages. But a series of recent songbooks offers a glimpse into the "genius" of AC/DC. As some of you might be aware, most AC/DC songs are written around the basic open chords of a guitar using standard tuning (E,A,D and G). What is revealed in the tablature in these books however are the nuances, the unplayed notes and the non-obvious fingerings that wring the most power out of these primary chords. Plus Angus's leads are broken out, so if you have the patience, you can emulate the melodious solos of the schoolboy himself. To facilitate your learning even further, two of the books ("Jam With..." and "Play Guitar With...") include CDs with instrumental renditions of the songs. Two versions of each song are presented: one with and one without the Angus part. So you can trade licks with Angus, or simply pretend you are Angus. One highlight from the "Play Guitar With..." CD is dubbed in audience noise at the beginning and during the lead break of "Whole Lotta Rosie". Not only does it replicate the live version of the song usually played on classic rock radio, but also you can imagine that the applause are for you! Plus, since there are no vocals on these tracks, they are potential karaoke fodder. Everyone knows the words so you can probably live without the lyrics scrolling across your karaoke machine's screen.

Coincidentally, I discovered AC/DC and obtained my first guitar at about the same time. And the first band I was in played almost nothing except AC/DC songs at first. Anyway, it's interesting to compare the way I used to play these tunes with the "authentic" versions in these books, because I was playing some of them completely wrong! I guess it's further testament to the strength of their songs. They even stand up to severe misinterpretation.

One interesting aspect of these books is that they seem to exist primarily for the purpose of helping the purchaser sound exactly like AC/DC. There are even essays on the amps, guitars, pickups, etc. that were used by the musicians on the CD to not only play like AC/DC but sound just like them. I guess this approach caters to one end of the cover song spectrum. At the other end, you might find something like the soon-to-be-released Buh Zombie solo recording. Whereas part of my "rock education" was firmly rooted in guitar rock, I have been equally influenced by improvised, noise-terrorist "music". I see this genre as a natural offshoot, and perhaps partly a reaction to, blues-inspired rock music. The cassette-only release, called "Empty Room Full Of Blues," will exhibit both arenas of influence. Side A consists of 6 cover songs. Bands covered (or "interpreted," if you will) include The B-52s, MOTO, The Pist, Elvis and even The Goblins. Side B is 6 untitled "noise pieces" inspired by the likes of P16.D4, Throbbing Gristle, Einsturzende Neubauten and Boy Dirt Car. Everything on the cassette was recorded utilizing the glorious "Buh-Tronics"™ effects array which, perhaps someday will be dissected and described in the "Play Guitar With Buh Zombie" guitar tablature book. So you too can get that Buh sound. Well, here's hoping, anyway.



Adagio "Sanctus Ignis" (LMP/SPV) Classical, epic, Yngwie Metal mystical noodling with ominous vocals. "My Adagio! My beautiful Adagio!"

ADD zine/CD comp (POB 8240 Tampa, FL 33674) Eight pounds of punk rock shit in a five pound bag!

Adema (Arista) Whimpering rage rick from somebody's brother. Replace the "D" with an "En" and you'll see what this band could use. They better get used to that joke.

Adventures Unlimited catalogue (One Adventure Pl. POB 74 Kempton, IL 60946) The logic that connects conspiracy theorists, UFOs, Tesla, and exotic travel to Mongolia (or Atlantis) is available for purchase on video and in book form in this crazy catalogue. The idea that any non-white country is as exotic as Alien Rapture and the Illuminati is weird but, it all makes strange sense in the context of this kook Logic.

Afroman "The Good times" (Universal) The best and worst thing about pot humor is that it's really funny if you're baked...but usually only if you're baked. In addition to drugs there's also plenty of sex (in the form of a Too Short "Freaky Tales"-type porno rap). In Roctoberland "Novelty Record" is never a dirty word, but this is just OK...unless you're toasted!

Ain't Nothing Like Fuckin' Moonshine zine, Soft Smooth Brain comix (POB 6645 Portland, OR 97228) Bwana Spoons spreads thick, beautiful ink around in art and word form with hypnotizin' skills.

Alco-beat zine (415 N. Main apt. B Bowling Green, OH 43402) Punk rock bitterness and cynicism that somehow transmogrifies into joyousness. A good notebook Elvis comic is the cherry on the sundae.

Alfie "if you happy with you need do nothing" (Twisted Nerve/XL) This is some kind of genius music. At times it makes me think of how the Smashing Pumpkins would sound minus all the rock with an actual sense of humor added. But that's a terrible description. Hey, I don't get paid much to do this.

Alice Cooper "Billion Dollar Babies, Deluxe Edition" (Warner Bros./Rhino CD) In the early 70's, my brother would play Alice Cooper, Slade, The Dolls, and this new group called Kiss, while I'd listen vicariously out in the hallway (I wasn't allowed in his room). Five years later, I bought "Billion Dollar Babies," a favorite from those days, at a pawn shop, and even got to see Alice live (He's much better now, by the way). Then as now, "B.S.B.s" takes sex, money, horror, teen (and even pre-teen) rebellion and rubs it in your face. After a remarkable job of remastering, all the demons of female-on-male rape, necrophilia, rubber doll lust and (ULP!) the 1972 election jump out of the speakers bigger 'n' meaner than ever!. The superb repackaging (Snakeskin wallet design reproduced in obsessive detail, right down to the perforated picture cards, but sans a removable billion dollar bill) includes a bonus booklet with great photos and memoirs. There's also a second CD with live recordings from '73, apparently from the excellent, tho' seldom seen, Rock flick, "Good To See You Again, Alice Cooper." The sound is great, and although Glen Buxton may not be playing on all of this, both he and Michael Bruce can be heard spreading napalm all over the home front, likewise for the underrated rhythm section of Neal Smith and Dennis Dunaway. My only complaint is that Alice's (surprisingly sparse) use of "adult language" appears to have been censored (in the movie, during "No More Mr. Nice Guy," he says, "I'm gettin' real pissed off and I'm turnin' green!" - that WAS a big deal, but in "School's Out" [Not included here] Alice shuts down an irate male heckler by saying, "AHHH, I DON'T LIKE BOYS, ANYWAY...FAGGOTS ARE ALL ALIKE!!") Besides live versions of most of the LP tracks, there's also "18" and (Perhaps their last obvious nod to Frank Zappa) "My Stars" Plus, there's two great versions of the unreleased ('til recently) "Slick Black Limousine," one of the best 70's Rockabilly tunes by a Hard Rock group NOT called Brownsville Station or Flamin'

Groovies (it even has a great psychedelic guitar outro, too!) and an early outtake of "Generation Landslide." However, even if Donovan did prove to be the only participant in the much-touted "super session" (Marc Bolan, Keith Moon, Nilsson, Jack Daniels...) sober enough to make it to the final release, there are PLENTY of outtakes from this period that are only available on bootlegs, but deserve legit release, too. Still, there's so much here to satisfy the collector geek in all of us. Here's hoping the other early Warner Bros. releases get the same treatment SOON. Same goes for that movie.

All Tomorrow's Parties 1.0 (ATP) The all star lineup from a fabled fest represented here includes Sea and Cake, Tortoise, Autechre, Mike Ladd, Calexico and more (no ESG, though, but that's another story). This isn't a live document, but rather a collection of remixes, edits and odd selections from these diverse groups that all fit together well here. That's because they're all sounding a special kinda weird; mellow, but still challenging, somewhat difficult, but still groovy. This is a pretty unique meal of a listening experience.

Alpha Motherfuckers: A Tribute To Turbonegro (Hopeless) I've had Euro friends tell tales of seeing Turbonegro shows that would make G.G. Allin blush, and their raw, nasty, GarageTrashRawk records have always supported that imagery in my mind. Thus, hearing some of the rawest and heaviest bands around, many of who likely saw the band live, pay tribute to the Kings is a good time. Queens Of The Stone Age, Supersuckers, Dwarves, Satyricon and some unlikely but welcome acts like Scared Of Chaka and Adz, and some prime material, make for a solid package.

The American Analog Set "through the 90s - singles and unreleased" (Emperor Jones POB 49771 Austin TX 78765) If you like sissy music and you wear glasses and you like sensitivity this will be your "Back In Black." Of course, I mean sissy music in a good, loving way.

American Head Charge "The War Of Art" (American) Oohhh...SCARY!

American Pie 2 soundtrack (Universal) There's some bad bands out now, and they include Alien Ant Farm, 3 Doors Down and Flying Blind. Hear them all on *The American Pie 2* soundtrack!

American Steel "Jagged thoughts" (Lookout) We have a punk band around here called Dead Steel Mill, and their fury is borne of the ghosts of the rust belt. Expecting more of the same here, I was taken aback to hear the steel mill worker vibe being drawn upon here for the same effects that The Boss triumphed with on his early LPs.

Amped by Jon Resh (\$4.50, Viper Press POB 3394 Chicago, IL 60690-3394) Resh writes about his experiences in a 90s punk band, describing a scene that has been underrepresented in print...until this month when at least five books came out on 80s and 90s American punk (including *Dance of Days*, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, and *Wash Out My Eyes*, all reviewed in this issue). Anyhow, I guess the actual writing itself must be pretty good in this book, because I read the whole thing, which I wouldn't expect to do with a book that fails in so many ways. I was excited to read this because Resh's previous work *Blue Fire Hereafter* was an amazing thing, a compilation of writing that demonstrated an editor/writer who really knew what was interesting. This book demonstrates the opposite to the Nth degree. Of course, he's telling stories that were cool to him at the time, but a writer should have perspective about the actual interestingness of one's own experiences. The stories of giant college punkhouse parties that he cops break up aren't particularly unique or transgressive. Replace the word "punk" with "frat" and how alternative/radical are you? Stories of triumphant shows, a girl wanting to have sex with him because he's in the band and fucked up venues around the country are not nearly as noteworthy as they're presented here. One chapter about the band vehicle breaking down in a small town where the nobody Alterna-band is treated as cultural beacons and has some genuinely remarkable experiences says a lot about the human condition and Americans and real, genuine interactions. If the rest of the book was that good I'd be raving about it.

Anti-Flag "Underground Network" (Fat) If you can't get behind this you are a poser that doesn't know the meaning of the word "Unity."

AntiScen "The Boys From Brutalsville" ((TKO 4104 24" St. @103 SF, CA 94114) What's the point of even reviewing AntiScen albums? If you've seen them you know they are the rawest, nastiest, most intense rasslin' rockers alive, every foray into the clubs or studio involving literal bloodshed. Unlike other ultra punk/rawk/scum combos, somehow Jeff and the boys always manage to live up to the show on tape, and this album,

even more than some other great ones in the past, is a superb example. Guns, wrestling, murder and daytime TV are all fitting subjects, and everything fits. The album juices!

The Apes "The Fugue In The Fog" (Frenchkiss 111 E. 14th PMB 229 NYC 10003) Monkey house masturbation scene porno loop soundtrack music...music so good that you keep pumping quarters into the peep booth coin slot just to hear the grooves long after you've climaxed.

Arab On Radar "Yahway Or The Highway" (Skingraft) MESS-iah!

Ape Has Killed Ape "Matricide" (True Classical POB 81-1821 LA, CA 90081) Imagine Roy Rogers as a spaghetti western dour cowboy discovering "the Forbidden Zone" and you'll "understand" this. Expect many Planet of the Apes bands to pop up this year, but believe me, this is no trend hopper, this monkey is "real."

The Atlantic Manor "The Desperate Vibe Of Emotional Devastation" (Do Too) Outsider music with insider nuances...including sharp backup vocals, crisp weird keyboard sounds, and some good drumming. Though the content sometimes is dreary, the spirit of successful D.I.Y. bedroom action seems to make this rather triumphant in tone.

Atom and his Package "Redefining Music" (Hopeless) I'm certainly happy the punk scene embraces this idiosyncratic nerd pop one man band. I love his intelligent sensibilities and unique subject matter (he hates Native American sports team naming, and he calls out people who owe him money) and this album even has a Madonna cover. This is actual not as humorous or funny as you'd expect, it's very serious in many ways. However, it is genuinely unique, the catchiness of the tunes will continue to win a following.

ATOMBOMBPOCKETKNIFE "God Save ABPK" (Southern) The crunching sound of stepping on cockroaches to a good groove.

Babes In Toyland "The Further Adventures Of..." (Fuel/Varese Sarabande) Rarities, unreleased stuff and live tracks (one from The Metro) by a band that did as honest a job at actually rocking while making "Alternative" stuff as anyone. I was never a big fan, but this is a fun listen.

Bablicon "the cat that was a dog" (Misra POB 20297 Tompkins Sq Station NYC 10009) Music for the scariest movie ever.

Backstage Pass II video (InZane Records) 90% of this is just material is from Zane's Backstage Sluts X-rated videos, but this has the porno and nudity cut out. So if you're into Cinemax softcore, but wish there were less nipples involved, this is for you.

Bad Astronaut vs. Armchair Martian (Owned and Operated POB 36 Fort Collins CO 80522) Lots of musicians from a couple of bands do seven songs (together? Apart?) I think members of each band are playing the songs of the other band, but the cryptic, though BEAUTIFUL, design work left me in the dim if not the dark as to what was going on. All tracks demonstrate a nice take on American Post-Byrds Country influenced Americana rock for an audience numbed by bad emo and ready for a glimmer of actual feeling and meaning.

Bantam Rooster "mexican leather" b/w "Summer In Hamtramck" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston, VA 20195) Get ready for Bantamania! This 7" should make them bigger than The Chipmunks. 2 Man raw trash genius spewings. Super creepy B side, by the way.

Robert Barry and Fred Anderson "Duets 2001" (Thrill Jockey) The nice thing about really good improvisational Jazz is that you don't need to know much about Jazz to know when you are hearing really good musicians making really good music.

Bedford/Supereighteen/Sometimes Seven/Floatation Walls split CD (Microcosm POB 14332 Portland, OR 97293) A four band split? OK, I'll go with it. Bedford made me bounce, supereighteen made me think, Sometimes Seven made me feel and Floatation Walls made me ponder the future.

The Beegees "This Is Where I Came In" (Universal) The sad thing about the Beegees is that their mega disco success forced a prolific, diverse creative act to stop recording because of changed expectations. Maybe I was confused, but I thought the castle on their old LP cover was really theirs, and I figured they had mega success before "Staying Alive." Well, here they return to the pop craftings of their pre-Disco fuzzy velour LP cover incarnation, and it's exceedingly pleasant. It's hard to

recapture youth, but showcasing their great talents doesn't seem to be a problem here. Will the VH1 nostalgia fans dig the non-boogie Beegees? Hard to say, but if the Beatles sold a zillion copies of a record last year, why not new songs by an act that in some countries shared the status (and the pop props) of the Fabs an eon ago.

Belvue "To Be Somebody" (golden seal POB 6637 Long Island City, NY 11106) You'd belong in Bellevue if you don't love this. The music reflects...and so do you!

The Best Of Planet Records (RPM) American expat Shel Talmy helmed this short-lived label best known (in the circles I'm in, at least) for hosting the Creation. The label only released a small amount of product, mostly singles, "Best of" is a relative term. This kicks off with some unimpressive Folk-Pop, and over the course of 24 tracks we also hear some fair to middling girl group stuff. A cover of "The Gamma Goochie" by The tribe is pretty raw. The Untamed have some presence, and The Corduroys really slink one to you with "Too Much Of A Woman." The best thing this collection has going for it is the eclecticism and the production. It's funny that this label had such a disparate sampling of sounds in its short lifetime. And every track here has some interesting sonic texture or bells and whistles, but for the most part something's wrong with more of these tracks than not, be it sub par material, girls with limited vox charms or derivative styles. Of course The Creation are the exceptions. "Making Time" has over the last few years gained some of the status it deserves as an all-time great song/recording. And "Painter Man" is a tuff chunk of stuff. Actually, if you start this CD halfway through it seems like genius stuff, but a slow start is a slow start. Maybe if this was a 30 minute LP best of I'd be thoroughly impressed.

Betty Already "Amerimaniacs" (Fly Lyla) Al ready all-willing and all-able, this might be dumb but it's honest and it enjoys the "rock."

Big Deal compilation (Mademoiselle) This Aussie comp has the theme of presenting bootleg versions of the original savage rock and r&b trax the Japanese gal garage band The 5-6-7-8s cover. Years ago the awesome "Songs The Cramps Taught Us" did the same thing...are the 5-6-7-8s as big as The Cramps in Oz? Anyhoo, fantastic selections here include cuts by local fave Alvin Cash, the Rock-A-Teens, the Highlights and the Elite's papa-ooh-mau-masterpiece, "One Potato." Obscure enough tracks sequenced in a party friendly manner to make this near-impossible to find record worth seeking out.

Big Ray and the Futuras "Desolation Planet" (Double Crown POB 4336 Bellingham, WA 98227, dblecrown.com) Instrumental surf grooves with actual body, gusto and atmosphere. A Big Ray of Surf Hope!

Big Time sarah "a million of you" (Delmark) I love it, it's groovin' raw, and it's ready for the riverboat!

Binocular (Maverick) The Alan Parsons Reject.

Blackmore's Night (SPV) I know what you're thinking, any record with Richie Blackmore dressed as a wizard and playing mandolin while a blonde wench sings Canterbury Tales era shanties must be great...and you're right! This record made me wish I had a dwarf jester sidekick!

Black Widows "Arocnaphobia" (Vital Gesture POB 46100 LA, CA 90046) Instrumental evilness with stocking masks! They should be the villains in the new Spider Man movie.

The Blamed "isolated incident" (Grrr 920 W. Wilson Chicago, IL 60640) These kids somehow learned Math (with a capitol "M") and how to wail on their axes in high school. And they say our school systems suck!

Blank Generation Revisited (Schirmer) Ever since the release of *Rock Archives*, Michael Ochs' criminally out-of-print 1984 compilation of old rock promo photos, I've had a serious jones for good music photog books. This tome captures the seedy black-and-white world of NY punk rock, as seen through the top lenscraftsmen & women of the day (Roberta Bayley, Stephanie Chernikowski, George Dubose, Godlis, Bob Gruen, and Ebet Roberts), and in its own way is just as essential as Ochs' book. Even the most casual pose invites you to read into it a little bit more. So what if I don't know the specific significance of Joe Strummer getting his pose on in front of a barber's shop, Glenn O'Brien rolling his own at the Mudd Club, Dee Dee Ramone with Sanyo boombox in hand misguidedly going for a hip-hop look, Richie Stotts of the Plasmatics rocking in the graveyard, Handsome Dick Manitoba grabbing a handful of his girlfriend's ass or one of the Cars trying to do the same with a runner

jogging by. What's important is that it looks like everybody involved had a good time doing it. On both sides of the camera.

The blast rocks!!! "you're fired" (Spam S.P.A.M. POB 21588 El Sobrante, CA 94820-1588) Considering that they played instruments made out of found garbage parts, I always thought that Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids would maybe sound a little more like this than the slick commercial sound they produced. Herein the rocks!!! present some Casio and garbagan primitive futurism that can't not be punk. This is gloriously absurd.

Bloody Beautiful magazine (\$7, BUA 1701 Broadway #347 Vancouver, WA 98663) Simply one of the finest new magazines I've seen since the minstrel Show era. Aesthetically remarkable, this magazine elegantly champions the sheet music, pencil moustaches and tailored snappiness of the Tin Pan Alley/early sound film era. Making this a steal is the inclusion of a red vinyl 7" single of revivalist Ian Whitcomb bring back to life two charming Hawaiian themed numbers.

The Blow Up "True Noise" (Empty US POB 12034 Seattle, WA 98102) Blow me! Away, that is. Nasty trash rock that you would be happy to break a bone dancing to.

Boot To Head Records Sampler 2 (Boot to head POB 9005 PDX, OR 97207, boottohead.com) Not the skinhead music you'd expect from a label with a name like this, but rather a diverse sampling of non-cookie cutter punk, h/c, emo and poppunk. Best band is Blaster the Rocket Boy, but Witness Protection Program and Crux both deliver.

Bows "cassidy" (pure/beggars) Mogwai side project that is more engaging than the front project. Atmospheric fairy tale ether cloud vibes rule!

Brain Rakes (brainrakes.com) Better than Bran Flakes. If Jane's Addiction took much mellower drugs they might be able to cover these tunes.

Doyle Bramhall II & Smokestack "Welcome" (RCA) I didn't even know there wasn't a white Lenny Kravitz before. And now there is.

Michelle Branch "The Spirit Room" (Maverick) Sweet! She's going to number 1+!



Broken Bones "without conscience" (High Speed POB 20 Prince St. Station NYC 10012, highspeedrecordings.com) Bottom heavy, nasty punk RAWK spew that successfully kicks one's brain against the sides of one's skull. Brutal is an understatement.

Shelby Bryant "cloud-wow music" (smells like records POB 6179 Hoboken NJ 07030) If there were a single word to say, "very, very, very lovely" I would have made this a one word review.

Bubblegum Music Is The Naked Truth edited by Kim Cooper & David Smay (Feral House POB 13067 LA, CA 90013) Behind devastatingly beautiful cover art lies dozens of magical, wonderland manifestos that unlock the secrets of the universe. What could possibly be better than music that sounds perfect...fun, light, bouncing, sweet Pop...what could be better? Obviously, if it were sung by monkeys, puppets, cartoon characters, or if the records came free on a cereal boxes! Learn about the why, wherefore, hows, whens, whos and whats in this volume that collects countless essays, lists, interviews and prescriptions that tell the stories of the Monkees, Briney, Buddha Records, the Banana Splits, The Cowsills and hundreds (thousands?) more of the most important cultural markers of the 20th-23rd centuries. Some of the best writers in the underground,

including Chuck Eddy, Peter Bagge, Dennis Eichorn, Greg Shaw, and Rotober's own James Porter make up an army of Bubblegum warriors on a suicide Jihad to inform the world of the greatness of grooviness. Please read this book!

Bugatti Type 35 "Traction" (bugattitype35.com) Bug out!

Built To Spill "Ancient Melodies of the Future" (Warner Brothers) Pretty music *soufflés* that keep you guessing...yet keep you coming back for more helpings. Showcases some delicate yet sturdy craftsmanship.

Bust magazine (PO box 1016 Cooper Station NYC 10276, bust.com) I hope this fun feminist mag is doing well as a slick, because it maintains the spirit it had as a zine, and that's remarkable.

Jimmy Burns "Night Time Again" (Delmark, 421 N. Rockwell, Chicago, IL 60618) This combines the clean, clear sound of the commercial Blues of Cray and SRV, but without the patina of artifice. Burns is the real deal, and *he can sing*, and he can *really* wail on the guitar. "Night Time..." is the right time!

Charlie Burton and the Texas Twelve Steppers "Rustic Fixer Upper" (Lazy S.O.B. POB 49884 Austin, TX 78765-9884) American rock and roll roots tunes rich with the (sadly all too rare) elements "genuine dignity" and "cleverness."

Busy Signals "Pretend Hits" (Sugar Free POB 14166 Chicago, IL 60614) A pleasant mellow nerd and his friends make Indie Rock Care Bears music and if you don't find it charming...then you need a hug!

Buzzsaw "Stimphooey!" (Doormat POB 8253 The Woodlands, TX 77387) If that movie where Huey Lewis goes around the country hustling karaoke contests (I'm not the only one who remembers that, am I?) were made with Buzzsaw singing, film audiences would react like the Nazis after they open the box in "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

The Casualties "die hards" (SideOne Dummy) Genuine fuck you up punk rock, none of that poppy pabulum, none of that coherent poser stuff. This is pub fights and liberty spikes, the proverbial "punk as fuck!" This is the act of saying "Oi!" through missing teeth.

Calexico "Even My Sure Things Fall Through" (Quarterstick) A bountiful collection of remixes, CD Rom videos and funky unreleased/alternative Mariachi hoedown get downs. Ambient becomes *Jambient*!

California (Trauma) If they're joking, I don't get it.

The Calling "Camino Palmero" (RCA) Don't call us...

Carbon 14 magazine (\$6, POB 29247 Philly 19125) Yet another issue of a magazine that celebrates trashy music and low art with full color portfolios of paintings and photography (and wrestling gospel) from the bes tin the biz. A triumph!

C Average "Second Rekoning" (KRS 120 NE State Ave. PMB 418 Olympia WA 98501) Cheered me up! Epic Metal themes, Northwest Garage homages and Guitar Goddery are Jackson Pollackd through your speakers onto your SOUL.

Cécilia "Avec Les Garçons" ep (Hillsdale) Finally! An easily available bootleg of one of the most justifiably collectible French pop chanteuses ever. This record is sweeter than a éclair!

Charm (SRC) A bizarrely cryptic concept album, of which the concept baffles and/or eludes me. A number of intriguing acts make strange music that seems to link together like a deformed DNA strand. Particularly pleasantly disturbing are the calmly dissonant Deerhoof, the ambient noise curiosity sounds of David Scott Stone and the choleric kiddie record groove of The Need. Very strange and satisfying.

Chicago Underground Quartet (Thrilljockey, thrilljockey.com) Imagine a sonic world where a mysterious, enchanted forest could be evoked with out any embarrassing cultural baggage of dungeons and Dragons/Renaissance Faire aesthetics.

Chocolate Watchband "At The Love-In Live! In Person At Cavestomp!" (ROIR 611 Broadway, suite 411 NYC 10012) I was at this show and I was sure they wouldn't release a CD, even though it had been announced before the show that such an album would be released. The band rocked out with what I thought was a short set of classic tunes and then played what I thought was an interminable set of bloated new material. I guess

I was wrong because this CD pretends the second part of the set didn't exist and reveals that there was actually over a dozen solid stubs at 60s greatness. And the band was tight, David Aguilar has maintained his voice, his figure and his sense of humor.

Choking Victim "Crack Rock Steady ep/Squatta's Paradise" (Tent City 101 W. 23rd St Box 2341 NYC 10011) All ages bowling alley punk show skacore that's admirably raw, earnest and straightforward.

Citizen Fish "Life Size" (Honest Don's POB 192027 SF, CA 94119-2027, honestdons.com) If you're "fishing" for punk excellence, "hook" this!

Les Claypool's Frog Brigade "Live Frogs Set 2" (Prawn Song 3470 19th St. SF, CA 94110) The absurdity of performing Pink Floyd "Animals" in its entirety is admirable, but the dire humorlessness of the execution is unexpected from Claypool and not particularly welcome.

The Comas "You Got The Bumblebee, I Got The Stinger" b/w "One Million Shining Eyes" (Sit-N-Spin 302 Oak Ave Carboro, NC 37510) They play slow because they're The Comas. If you play it at 45 it's still slow, but has charming Chipmunk vocals. At regular speed the songs are rather enchanting, even if it's not your bag, and the picture disc is oddly subdued artwise, which is a weird thing to do with a picture disc.

The Comics Journal (Fantagraphics) I haven't read this regularly for years, and this is now far from the vitriolic mouthpiece Gary Groth helmed in the old days (and I mean that in a good way). Some parts of this are kinda in-jokey, but for the most part this is a well constructed, edited look at goings ons in Alternative comix. Top stuff: a roundtable with underground artists, and an amazing (though disturbing) pow wow comix artist's wives. Lowpoint is an article about Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, that's just someone's school paper, but it's made up for with Groth's lambasting of McCloud's sequel is prime TCJ attitude.

Comma "Elusive Dreams (Hammer) The Comma before the storm...of greatness! Full on drama Metal with flourishes, lush minutes long intros and guitar swordsmanship worthy of noble Euro origins!

a.c. cotton "half way down" POB 13701 Portland, OR 97213) Perfect American heartland music from the left ventricle of a country sized heart. Believable truths.

Continental Drifters "Better Day" (Razor and Tie POB 585 Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276) Continental Drifters is simply one of the nicest music making outfits around. Their songs are lively, inspiring and really well something up inside of me. It's not Country, it's not Beatles pop, it's not folk, it's not anything in particular. It's just a wonderful fusion of great Americana musics. This is even better than their last, which I dug, and there's a 2 or 3 song sequence near the beginning of the album that's *rules!*

Competitorrr demo (Competitorrr@zerotv.com) Genius music deeply concerned with funk in every sense of the word.

Corporate Avenger "Freedom Is A State Of Mind" (Koch) I thought this was just going to be a joke, a RapCore Metal band with horror theatrical looks releasing an album of songs with song names sure to piss of parents. I mean, "The Bible Is Bullshit," "Jesus Christ Homosexual," and "Taxes Are Stealing," are titles that are high school angry, Freshman in College at best. But this is as good as low end 80s hardcore, and it totally far exceeded my (admittedly low) expectations.

Crash Palace (Trauma) Yuch. I hear they're really good live.

Crash Rickshaw (Tooth and Nail) Though you can hear the Smashing Pumpkins and Jane's Addiction in these grooves, this surprisingly sounds more 2000s than 1990s.

Crimewave u.s.a. zine (POB 980301 Ypsilanti, MI 48198) This is one of the best zines around because it makes as much sense as an Eskimo refrigerator salesman...but it's even funnier!

Cripple Kid "the little dipper" (Microcosm) Earnest howls over technical Post-Emo intro-wails. Crippling emotionally.

Sean Croghan "from burnt orange to midnight blue" (In Music We Trust) Sweet and sour soul-searching that will make your heart think (if such a thing is physiologically possible).

The Crookshanks demo (10232 S. Pulaski #207 Oak Lawn, IL 60453) Chicagoland's ONLY 60s Garage act as far as I'm

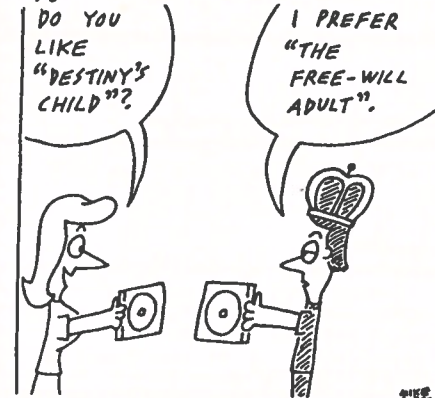
concerned, this is trashy asn tough and fun as a cold case Old Style at a Lake Michigan beach barbecue!

Crossbreed "Synthetic Division" (Artemis 130 5th Ave NYC 10011) This is a crossbreeding of shit and crap. I call it shcrap.

The C*nts "Oh no it's the C*nts" (Disturbing 3238 S. Racine Chicago, IL 60608) This band has managed to get older and older every year, yet somehow their records have devolved to sounding like genuine 16 year old Garage bands going at it. Those are some amazing C*nts!

Da Bloody Gashes "Pedal To The Metal" (Total Zero POB 32046, 901 Ste Catherine E. Montreal, Qc. Canada H2L 2E0) Bloody ridiculous! A savage mess that maybe should scare me but actually makes me laugh every time I hear the raw, mushy blood beats!

Daddy "Beg To Be Free" ep (daddywantsyou.com) Textured, striking sexy music with arresting work. Kinda scary but scary good.



dance of days: two decades of punk in the nations capitol by

Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins (Soft Skull 98 Suffolk St. 3A NYC 10002) At least five books of history and interviews and two personal histories/novels were released in the last half year or so (most this Summer) about 80s and 90s punk culture. But the finest book of all has to be this fascinating journey through one of the interesting scenes of them all, DC hardcore (or hardCore). To be honest, a great deal of the bands and history that centers around Dischord Records has always been more interesting culturally than musical to me...sure I dug Minor Threat, but a lot of that stuff doesn't really connect with me tune-wise. Yet, what is more fascinating, usually on an absurd level that Ian and Co. can't be blamed for, than the straightedge movement? This book starts off in the early punk days with Slickee Boys and Urban Verbs, but quickly we get to the key moment in DC punk. Everyone knows about the famed English Ramones show attended by every kid who would become a major player in Brit 77 punk. But who would have guessed that the equivalent in the DC scene was a Cramps show? Believe it or not the regimented, ultra-earnest emo-birthing DC sound was inspired by the messiest, most absurdly theatrical punk band this side of the Misfits. That 1979 show would kick off a two decade history that produced a remarkable amount of specific, crucial markers of US hardcore history. Jeff Nelson and Ian MacKaye would provide one of the prime models for a punk label with Dischord Records, Ian's band Minor Threat would draw X's on the hands of thousands of straight edge "don't drink, don't smoke, don't fuck, at least they can fucking think" straight edgers the world over, Positive Force would provide a model for punk D.I.Y. activism that tapped into the music scene to draw kids and to raise funds, Henry Rollins would become the poster boy for thuggish, aggressive hardcore, Rights of Spring would introduce the emo subgenre that rules the all-ages scene today, Jenny Toomey would help nurture the Indie Pop scenes of the early 90s, Riot Grrl would draw as many key figures from Washington east as from Washington State, and Fugazi would ultimately become the biggest punk band to stay totally unaffiliated with a major label, and they would also help raise the bar for punk audience expectations by producing genuinely challenging and progressive music. That's a lot to come from such a tiny city, and it's notable that it hasn't really been documented well enough until now. Andersen, as a member of Positive Force was perhaps too close to tell this story objectively, so I suspect the collaboration with Jenkins helps put this book in clearheaded order. I say this because a concession seems to have been made where Andersen's side bars very effectively tell his completely personal side of the story, and the last chapter which is written from his perspective doesn't hold up to the quality of the rest of the book. However, his intense passions are what truly fuels the body of the work, and the most convincing portions are descriptions of specific performances,

individual shows, certain songs played just once, that the author convinces us were crucial, soul wrenching, historical moments regardless of the size of the crowd. Those moments aren't about "I was there" cred, they are about the potential of punk as an expressive art form, and the author *believes* and makes you do the same. Andersen is especially fascinated by a few fairly fantastic characters. Lefty, a black woman who led a faction of DC's skinhead movement is revisited over and over in the narrative, and you really get a compelling, if incredibly incomplete, portrait of her conflicted life. And most amazing is the tale of H.R. and Bad Brains. At no point does the story follow any known rock band template. Though they are doomed to never have the musical career success they (theoretically) deserve, this book makes it clear that there is some media that will tell this story some day in a way that will allow the entire world will know about this amazing band with perhaps the most fascinating story in punk history. One can't comment on this book without mentioning the fantastic black and white photography by Cynthia Connolly, Amanda MacKaye, Pat Graham, Glen Freidman and others. The images really deliver the power of the story.

Danielson Famile "Fetch the Compass Kids" (Secretly Canadian 1703 N. Maple Bloomington IN 47404) I'm absolutely sure I like this, but I also find it deeply disturbing. What's so disconcerting about this is that it is bizarre, progressive, creepy strange music that remarkably seems completely sincere and devoid of irony. It's one thing to be intentionally weird but to arrive at unusualness in as honest a manner as this is unique and almost chilling. Daniel has a triumphantly creepy voice. Lullabies for children who may not get to sleep. And this is meant to be a positive review, by the way.

The Dark Fantastic "Goodbye Crooked Scar" (Up) They ain't lying! Darkly fantastic and fantastically dark! Alternate universe/Bizarro world Nick Cave Karaoke contest winners!

Joe Davis "hope chest" (In Music We Trust) Non hippie coffee house confessional sensitive symphonies.

The Daybirds "turnstyle" (EGC) For the birds...and the birds are better for it!

The Deacons "Greetings From Brooklyn" ep (1005 Foster Ave. 3rd Fl. Brooklyn, NY 11230) I thought this was going to be wicked hardcore because of the xerox graphics and flyers reprinted, but in the great NY Bowerly tradition, this is not just punk, but also totally Rock n Roll in a drunk, classic, nasty way. Rhymes "fuck" with "luck," and I don't think you can argue with that

Dead Kennedys "Mutiny on The Bay," "Plastic Surgery Disasters/In God We Trust," "Frankenchrist," "Give Me Convenience Or Give Me Death," "Bedtime for Democracy" (Manifesto/Decay POB 11399 Oakland, CA 94611) See, I'm old. I have all the Dead Kennedys records and I never even thought about them not being in print. So if you're not old, or if you somehow forget to get these records "back in the day" (you were maybe a Lionel Richie fan at the time?) you should flip your freaking wig (or if you're young, your actual hair) about these releases. The big news is the new album of the bunch, the live "Mutiny on the Bay." This isn't some muddy boot either, it's a clear, crisp (ok, the DKs never were actually "crisp") slab of sound. The one thing you don't get on CD is the secret of the live Dead Kennedy's...Jello was a sexy rock star in person, looking cute as Elvis and full of kinetic energy. But you do get his super confident gusto on this disc, and the band is really together. It's a show from well into the 80s, so the rawness isn't there, but that's more than made up for with the bigger repertoire ("MTV Get Off The Air" sounds better than the studio version...and has never been more meaningful than in 2001). I know there were some legal wranglings around this material, but my name is Bennett and I'm not in it! Whatever the deal, this music deserves to be out there for the peoples.

The Deadly Snakes "I'm Not Your Soldier Anymore (In The Red) Evil inbred mountain/Texas wickedness. Sloppy soul stew that you'll proudly pick out of your beard for days.

Dead Moon "Trash & Burn" (Empty POB 12034 Seattle, WA 98102, emptyRecords.com) This isn't the best Dead Moon record ever, but that's an unfair comparison, because the best Dead Moon records combine savage rawness, dignified, contrarian anti-normalcy superpowers and stealth pure 60s popcraftsmanship in ways that are subliminally enchanting to the 10th degree. This album combines savage rawness, dignified, contrarian anti-normalcy superpowers and stealth pure 60s popcraftsmanship in ways that are subliminally enchanting to the 8th degree.

Death and Candy comix by Max Andersson (Fantagraphics) Andersson's rich, raw inkscapes frame narratives that would be easy to label as absurd or surreal. But absurdity has implications of funniness, which this book doesn't evoke, and surreal is a poor fit because these stories, despite tractor headed characters, malleable faced vagrants and unusual linear progressions, seem extremely real. Or to be more precise, these capture the hyper real but non-sensible rhythms and realities of dreaming.

def poets society (New Disorder 115 Bartlett St. San Francisco, CA 94110) If Jurassic 5 is rap for your chiropractor, than this is rap for your hip C.P.A. Includes big ups to "Kids From Suburbia" and a shout out to Vancouver.

Desperate Love zine (bigbabybunny@hotmail.com) Beyond desperation! There aren't enough magazines out there promoting retarded musicians and pedophilia! But now there is just the right amount of magazines out there promoting retarded musicians and pedophilia...ONE! Genius is a four letter word!

The Dickies "All This And Puppet Stew" (Fat, fatwreck.com) Wow, this is a great Dickies record! And a great Dickies record is a great record. Less punchlines and more *punch* this time around, but still all fun.

Ani Difranco "revelling/reckoning" (Righteous Babe) A couple of discs from the tuff gal: The first CD features some textured grooving I can really connect with, but the second is mellow and boring, but what ever perks your patchouli!

Digger "Trainwreck" (Hopeless) I dig. Grrr!

dirt bike annie "superscope" (Break Up POB 15372 Columbus, OH 43215-0372) Sweet and sour pop with sour and sweet harmonies. Meaningfully pointless.

The Dirtbombs "Ultraglide In Black" (In The Red 118 W. Magnolia Blvd. POB 208 Burbank, CA 91506, intheredrecords.com) Mick Collins has been on a lot of great...and a lot of fucked up...records, but I honestly think this is his best ever. With a tight (yet loose) combo behind him, and with a voice at 110%, Mick explores, pays tribute to and glorifies Black pop/funk/soul/rock/punk songwriting with covers of Mayfield, Marvin, Smoky, Sly, Stevie, The Walrus, and more. There are passages on this, particularly on Mayfield's "Kung Fu" and on Barry White's "I'm Qualified To Satisfy You," where this record is *TRULY* amazing. Top it off with an thrift shop painting of Presidents of Soul Mt. Rushmore and you have my top pick so far in 2001.

Donovan's Brain "Tiny Crustacean Light Show" (Get Hip) Adult Contemporary Psychedelic Music?

The Dorks (Man With A Gun POB 15327 Boston, MA 02215) Stick a dork in it...it's fun

Dragstrip Syndicate "Volume" (Beluga, www.belugarecords.com) Total RAWK with every American majestic Bar Rock magic trick perfected. Pure and irresistible.

Dream Babes Volume 2:Reflections (RPM) Wow! This collection of 60s Brit Girl rock from the EMI vaults kicks off with Linda Laine doing a bubblegum gem about a boy causing her, "Low Grades and Hot Fever!" Not all the tunes magically capture the teen groove (Elkie Brooks sounds too old, and whatever Folk Rock bandwagon the Levee Breakers are trying to hop, they overhopped). But when Cilla Black accuses her young man of believing, "Love is A Four Letter Word," her natural, charmingly average voice *sells* it. Other highlights: Helen Shapiro's attitude in her vox sounding like she's really done some living, the Great Samntha Jones practically panting out her lyrics, and Jena and the Statesides matching the tuff stuff track they sing over note for note. Horror fans take heed: scream queen Caroline Munro does a passable job on the Pop torch tip, and Tracy does a creepy track apparently from a Hammer soundtrack.

The Droo Church "In A Pasture Built For Lovers" (Hall Of Records POB 69281 West Hollywood, CA 90069) An idiosyncratic music buffet with some well seasoned cutlets and ghoulishes.

Dryspell "Kitty Porn" (Ill Leagal) I know what Dry Spells, it spells P-U-R-E-G-O-L-D!

Duotang "The Bright Side" (Mint) A harder, a times even Metalier, XTC. Better than Pootie Tang!

Dwelling Portably zine (POB 190 Philomath, OR 97370) A diy. vibed journal/how to book with tips for camping/squatting/being homeless/traveling cheap, or whatever

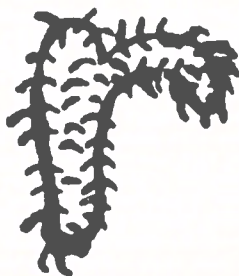
reason you might have for sleeping, eating, drinking...dwelling I guess would be a good word...outside. Very straightforward, no attitude and a handy mag to have.

The Dynatonas (Dynosonic POB 1666 Orange, CA 92856) Flavorful surf/drag-strumentals with great underwater/outer space/black and white JD movie vibes and no 90s punk metal impurity. Deke Dickerson has a hand in some production hhere, and his endorsement is good as gold in my book!

Early Humans (wantage usa) Caevmen with guitars would be able to make this music...if they were funky!

Edenbridge "Sunrise In Eden" (Sensory POBox 388 Voorhees, NJ 08043) The soundtrack to the Medieval fables Michael Bolton might tell his dullard children as bedtime stories.

The Electric Prunes "Lost Dreams" (Birdman) I burned a LOT of incense to this band's first two great LPs in college. Rarely has one band simultaneously mastered the Punk snarl and the exotic Psych vibe of daze gone by without sounding "I showed up for a math test in my underwear" awkward. What's on here? Well, some of the very best tracks from the first two albums, some rare single sides, and some revelatory unissued tracks. I've played holes through my originals AND the reissues, so it's like getting my cherry back. The opener, "Shadows" is an incredible track, recorded for a film soundtrack, which was supposedly turned down by The Doors (the Prunes, unlike The Doors, did not challenge network censors, changing "hormones" to "senses" on The Smothers Brothers Show). An unreleased Electric Prunes song that's as good as the two or three best ones here ("You've Never Had It Better," "The Great Banana Hoax," "Long Day's Flight ('til Tomorrow)") You're damn right Kim Fowley can hear the venom in my cock! The other unreleased tracks are about as good, The Hollies' "I've Got A Way of My Own" has great harmonies (as you'd better have to take on The Hollies) super-crunch guitar and a nice Folk Rock vibe, while "World of Darkness" has the choppy edginess (AND post-Surf twang) of early Love. Their great debut single, "Little Olive" and "Ain't It Hard" (With the unbelievably UNcensored line, "Your brother's in the bathroom with acid in his head"!!!) and the Bubble YUM of the final, pre- God Rock stab at the charts, "Everybody Knows You're Not in Love" (another song that, like the outstanding "I Happen To Love You" was probably rejected by The Monkees, are all welcome additions, too not to mention the remarkable collection of live and in-studio pics. I'd also like to add that Jim Lowe, though he sometimes resembled a grown up, turned on Richie Rich, was still the supreme Punk howler he rarely got credit for being, and the several guitarists who made up this group (I once worked with a much older gal who claimed her husband was an ex-Prune, but I got fired before I could investigate further) layed down some of the most savage and challenging guitar lines in their day. Even labelmate Jimi Hendrix had to cop to admiring the lads. (Note: As of this writing, I've been informed that the Electric Prunes have reformed, and reports on their first reunion gig in California have been very good).



Enemies/Pitch Black split CD (Lookout 3264 Adeline St., Berkeley, CA 94703, lookoutrecords.com) Pitch Black have way cooler photos and logo and graphics, with all kind of pumpkin headed Halloween monster themes, but their music is about as scary as "It's the great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown." Enemies look pretty standard, but their music is dark and nasty and intimidating. Maybe my CD got mixed up.

Erase Errata "other animals" (Troubleman Unlimited 16 Willow St. Bayonne NJ 07002) Surfing the No Wave like a tsunami, this is one strange piece of fruit that tastes as good as chocolate pie with deliciously bitter chocolate.

ESG "A South Bronx Story" (Universal Sound 12 Ingestre Place, Soho, London W1R 3lp), Live Ladyfest Midwest (Congress Theater, Chicago) I've bought these songs on bootleg 12" records. I've bought the legit originals at collector's prices, recent high end bootleg LPs, and now I have their best most complete packaging yet, and I'm still amazed when I hear these

tunes as if the first time. This is the most original dance music ever, funky but not funk, dub-esque but not dub, punky but not punk...it's its own creature. And when they played here in August it was transcendent! I had to pick my face up when I saw the legit band play "Moody" live...perfectly! The voice is as pristine as ever, and the daughters of the originals play bass and guitar with the same outsider/novice innocence as heard on the original records. Having ESG play as Ladyfest was brilliant and a triumph!

The Evaporators "Honk The Horn" ep (Nardwuar Records, nardwuar.com) To many the highlight of this frantic single will be the sole non musical cut: Nardwuar interviewing Tommy Lee about driving his boat with his "dick." But when you step back from this you realize that this joyous song cycle, and Nardwuar's whole career as a singer, writer, interviewer and "media assassin" is really a dick on the steering wheel of the boat of 21st century popular culture! All hail the napkin man!

Evil Eye comix by Richard Sala (Fantagraphics) Sala draws elegant beautiful strangeness but more importantly he has a passion for storytelling that is off kilter, yet as traditional as a Barks duck adventure or a Tintin epic. This comic series evokes Darger girls, Scooby Doo cartoons and some Gothic fairy tale Film Noir film that never got made.

Explode Your Brain (POB 14975 Mpls MN 55414) I expected this to be Nu Rap Metal or something from the cover art, but was pleasantly surprised with the technodelic textures it contained. Post Industrial puppet show soundtrack music!

Extreme Metal by Joel McIver (Omnibus) This encyclopedia of Grind, Death, Thrash, Speed Metal, Black Metal, and all other long haired glorious declarations of Odin's greatness and the like may not be the most comprehensive music reference resource, but it's certainly one of the funnest cover to cover encyclopedia reads you're gonna plow through. Two theories of mine were confirmed by this book. First of all, there is an almost pathological affinity to "A" names in Extreme Metal quarters. Apollyon, Anacrusis, Absu, Abhoth, Arkanum and Acrophet could never be Polka or Hip Hop, bands; the single word, almost nonsensical "A" name is a sure sign of Extremity. Also, you can't use a "The" in front of your name. I suppose this applies to classic Metal as well. There's no The Anthrax or The Iron Maidens (or The Abigors, for that matter). The writing in the book is pretty solid, a bit fanzine-ish, but pretty explanatory even to novices. I wish he wasn't so anti-corpselpaint, I personally love corpselpaint. This book also introduced me to my new fave band, Germany's Running Wild. The all pirate Metal combo led by Rockin' Rolf!

Fade To Black: a book Of Movie Obituaries by Paul Donnelly, **Tombsone Blues: The Encyclopedia Of Rock Obituaries** by Nick Televiski (Omnibus) There is a tradition of British obituaries that has spawned several "Best Of" volumes, in which extremely witty, coded writing showcases some wordsmithery rarely seen in journalism. These books aren't exactly in that tradition, but rather seem to be collections culled from various obit sources. What makes these volumes worthwhile is that many of these figures are so obscure that their names disappeared until they died, and even in death they didn't make it back into the reference books. These fill in gaps with short, respectful, surprisingly un-morbid summaries of the lives of the great and small.

Jad Fair and Daniel Johnston "It's Spooky" (Jagjaguar 1020 South Walnut Bloomington, IN 47401) A re-release of a magical album that connected two of the sweetest, eccentrics to pen paeons to Monsters and animals with supreme sincerity. Bonus tracks with comparable charms to the classics you may already have make this a worthy upgrade.

Fairmont Girls "tender trap" (Deary Me POB 19315 Cincinnati, OH 45219) Fairmont? They should be called GREATmont!

Fall Silent "Six Years In The Desert" (Revelation) Fury-core tinkering on the brink of noise combustion but always remarkably hurtling towards hardcore at 78 rpm.

Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds "Dig The Buzz" (RPM) Farlowe's recordings from 1962 to 1965 are collected here, and it's worth a spin. Not the prettiest vocalist, Farlowe is heard here handling some material and arrangements that sometimes nail the Blues/R&B grooves sweeping London at the time, but more often sound like polished/Pop arrangements. But Farlowe's voice has a presence and some actual soul, and silly tunes like "Girl Trouble" (not related to the Elvis movie) sound more gritty and real than they possibly should when his husky, earnest voice is belting. So even his kisser and weak stuff couldn't hold him back. Not a must have CD, but if you dig the early 60s scene he came from this is a very interesting listen

Farm Team "Dargons" (Pensamplivox POB 479282 Chicago, IL 60647) The phrase "glorious mess" is illicit.

Fartz "What's In A Name...?" (Alternative Tentacles, alternativetentacles.com) Twentyfirst century recordings of "the hits" by a band that most definitely earns the (uncomfortable) title "Punk Legends." However, 90s technology seems to be employed NOWHERE as this is a raw, hardcore, nasty barebones slab that seems to have teenage bile and fire oozing from everywhere. Great matching cut n paste graphics make for a total package, and stick around for the familiar bonus cuts. This is a must have.

Federation X/Fleshies split single (Molasses Manifesto 505 32" St. #107 pmb 190 Bellingham, WA 98225) Punk rock? JUNK ROCK. ROCK, ROCK, ROCK! No stadium is large enough for this theatrical Monsters of Rawk supershow.

Feminist Baseball zine (\$3, POB 9609 Seattle, WA 98109) I'm glad to see this zine back. A full page xerox photo of John Fahey playing with his dog sums this up perfectly.

The Finches "Whiskey January" (Off White POB 408016 Chicago, IL 60625) Finch-tastic! Dolly and Porter reincarnated into two people who actually like each other, and hang out in coffeehouses.

Michael Lee Firkins "Decomposition" (Nuerra POB 641602 Omaha, NE 68134) Rock so classic you can't believe it's new. Sweet sounds that would rock and move a bar and a stadium with equal force.

Fleshies "Kill The Dreamer's Dream" **Fleshies/Phantom Limbs** split single (Alternative Tentacles) Two words describe the F-band: "Real Riik." They're not making light of the R the O the C and the K, they are celebrating excess and decadence from the black depths of their hearts. The single couples them with the spine chilling disturborock of the P-Limbs. Whatta combo!

The Foamers "Six Pints None The Wiser" (Tent City) Nasty, ugly punk with enough unexpected polish to go down smooth but enough bile to come back up again and make a mess on the carpet.

Freddie Mercury by Peter Freestone with David Evans (Omnibus) This "intimate memoir" is by a theater dude who was hired by Queen as costume manager during the "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" era, and became Freddie's personal assistant until his death. Thus, this story starts kinda late in the game, and Queen is enjoying its last taste of American glory just as Peter gets on board. Thus, the book is more about the habits and lifestyles of Freddie during a somewhat frustrating, less active period. And habits and lifestyle are good terms, because intimacy here doesn't reference personal inner feelings, but rather everyday habits and doings. Freddie liked to collect boxes, drank spearmint Schnapps, and the only two books he ever read may have been *The Spartacus Guide* to international places of gay interest and the American version of the same book. From the early section of the book when they are on the mammoth tour I learned two crucial facts: during Brian May's solo Freddie would get his hair styled and blow dried, and Queen's dress code/rock philosophy was: "If a gig is small wear black, if it's big wear white." Of course the book ends on a down note, with Freddie's tragic death. By the dignity and grace and loyalty this Man Friday shows really even helps portray Mercury's last days with class. A very good read.

From Zero "One Nation Under" (Arista) A zero on a scale from zero to a million.

Edith Frost "Wonder Wonder" (Drag City) Drowsy...yet WOW-sy!

fugu "fugu I" (Minty Fresh POB 577400 Chicago, IL 60657) Fu-great! Strangely quiet layers of music pop pastry with magical production that makes what is likely excess sound like perfect, polite restraint.

Gammera "Smoke and Mirrors" (Zoltron.Com) Heavy monster rock, that's scary, scaly and thunderous.

Glam Warp by Jim Blanchard (Fantagraphics) Jim Blanchard unveils several dozen monsterpieces that marry the grotesque and glamorous in a world where headlight cheesecake and roadkill bodily fluids rarely are too far apart. Posters for movies you wish you could see (Mimi Van Peebles' "Sister Sweetback," starring Rosalind Cash and released by AAIP...African American international Pictures), show flyers for bands that don't exist (though I think I saw "Slunk Lord" at a bar last year),

postcards, magazine covers and ads abound, all with twisted sensibilities that remove them only a nanometer from reality, yet light years from normalcy.

David Graza "Overdub" (Atlantic) "Say Baby" is this songwriter's version of indie.rie's "Video" song. I like that he calls this textured guitar stuff Soul Music.

Rebecca Gates "Ruby Series" (Badman) This makes me feel that special kind of nauseous you get when reading in a car. Not to say it's a bad record, perhaps I could liken it to reading something good while driving, but it still makes me kinda sick.

Gene Loves Jezebel "Giving Up The Ghost" (Triple X) Sounds like bad U2 (as opposed to good U2). What happened?

Glamour zine Usually clip zines (made up of found text and images are chaotic nasty looking schizo things, but these paeans to 50s pulchritude and loveliness (think Mansfield, Yvonne DeCarlo and Julie London LP covers) are so aesthetically flavorful and satisfying that they made me pluck my eyebrows.

The Gluey Brothers "Stiff For the Elders" (glueybrothers.com) Made me glue myself! Captures the surreality of L.A. in a way that the term "novelty Record" doesn't apply, though it totally does in every way.

God Forbid "Determination" (Century Media, centurymedia.com) Rumbling, powerful, vital underground Metal that makes exit nine off the Jersey Turnpike proud. American thrash and hardcore fueled, this should be the future of Metal (but probably isn't, unfortunately).

Godzik Pink "Black Broccoli" (SRC POB 1190 Olympia, WA 98507-1190) Ah yes, black broccoli indeed. This is experimental Jazzscapes that Mumenshantz could go buck wild with. If a cabaret performer could juggle to these rhythms he or she would win 2 genius grants.

Happy Supply "Health Place" EP (Dutch Courage) They'd be the most affable, laffable couple in the Chi-Town Rock scene, except they ain't a couple, so Tinkerband wins that award, BUT, Ian and Tara swap (instruments, that is!) and the groove is understandably different than on their debut... so even if you DIDN'T get suckered into thinking this was some talented, unsung early 80's New Wave act (e.g. The Frantics, Normals, Los Reactors, or even the "Big in France" Comateens) it's hard not to like this collage of sound that stands up to any era. You've got Suicide-cheap drum machine drone, cheesy keyboards worthy of Joe "King" Carrasco in his prime (he had one, trust me), swirling psychedelic noises from undiscovered sources, smart and sexy female vocals (Tara reminds me a bit of Moe Tucker, IF she'd been, like, really attractive...) primitive synthesizers borne more out of necessity than a bid to be on the cover of *The Reader*, and Ian's occasional feigned(?) vocal asexuality (Much like Clay Reed from The Subsonics), which, judging from all the pretty girls I see at their shows is having the opposite effect one would assume. Likewise, when Tara sings, "Is there time to get in your pants?" it sounds so blasé, but only a cad would think what I'm thinking. I can't help it, though. On my way to their last gig, I saw a guy going to town (and that town was WAY DOWN SOUTH) in a truck with his old lady.... I guess that's a good sign.

Jesse Harris & the Ferdinandinos "Crooked Lines" (Bean) At its best this sounds like a Tom Waits record if tom had a woosy voice.

Herman's Hermits featuring Peter Noone, Live (Chicago) Peter Noone has been very vocal in his resentment regarding his inability to use the name Herman's Hermits, and that his bandmates would carry on without him well into the 90's. More recently, however, Hermits' guitarist, and legal holder of the band name, Derek Leckenby, passed away, leaving (not without much litigation, I'm sure) the ball in Noone's court, and run with it he did. This man has charm to SPARE, and a voice that grabs you from the word "Go." Within five minutes, he had the audience wrapped around his finger. So much so, in fact, that he was not above goofing on their collective heads. Here's a few samples: "You, sir, you look just like one of The Beach Boys...One of the ones who's DEAD! You look just like DENNIS!" "Yeah, I know you yanks had a big holiday on July 4th...In England, we pass that date over on our calendars, we go, 'July 2nd, 3rd, FIFTH'...You sing 'The Star Spangled Banner,' which, to us, is a song about bombs dropping on our Granddad's heads!" "You're HOW old? NINE?! How did you know the words to all our songs? Did your parents punish you or something? 'Eat your vegetables. Do your homework, and listen to your Herman's Hermits CD!' " You're how old? Fourteen? See me after the show! Just kidding!" "You see this? That's me ARSE. We men, our arses climb up our backs as

we get older, like Paul Revere! He's got a hump back there, so he can scratch his arse on stage! Sometimes, it moves over to your gut, so you can see the beer you've drank! Like you, sir, you look like you're going to give birth to a six-pack!" "We played at McCormack Place in 1965...Wot you mean, you remember? You can't have, it burned down ages ago!" "You, up there in the hotel window across the street! We ought to make you buy tickets!" "I remember when only WOMEN used to scream when I'd take off me coat." The Don Rickles of Rock 'n Roll, ladies and gentleman! Apart from that, the new model Hermits are Mods to a man, in period appropriate suits and haircuts, armed with beautiful Fenders and Rickenbackers, and throwing in little Who and Creation embellishments at every given opportunity. Though concentrating mainly on the hits, they still managed to throw in a blistering "My Generation," segueing into a Ramones-worthy "I'm Henry VIII, I am," and even some very credible covers of "Ring of Fire," "If I Were a Carpenter" and even a few bars of "The Battle Of New Orleans," which, predictably, Noone cut short, "I've always hated that song!" I thought we were going to have a mini-riot, though, when a fan tossed Peter a Cubs' cap, which he promptly threw back, telling the crowd, sorry, but he couldn't give a toss for The Cubs. Nice one, Pete.....

Hi-Standard "Love Is A Battlefield" (Fat) The best Japanese-guys-sounding-like-a-poppy-Scottish-pub-rocking-Elvis-covers-bands-record I've heard in awhile.

Holly Golightly "Singles Round-Up" (Damaged Goods POB 671 London, E17-9GH) A singles collection from a Skiffle angel who brings a sexy almost monotone (every slight, slight vocal variation is electric) to Garage/Rockabilly/Noise/and Ike Turner soul. How can you go wrong with all her singles. You're only problem with this CD is you'll fall in love with her!

Good Riddance "Symptoms Of A Leveling Spirit" (Fat) Good Riddance? Try GREAT riddance!

Gorillaz (Virgin) I never bought any bubblegum in England, but I imagine they might get it wrong, and if this is supposed to be 21st century Bubblegum, I'm not chewing. As meta/transgendered BritPop though this is pretty good, but it doesn't sound like cartoons are making the music.

Greenleaf Rebellion/Underdog split zine 2716 West Prindville St. Chicago, IL 60647) Underdog, the long running punk zine that covers everything but punk, is joined by the debut issue of a great super aesthetic, mostly handwritten (with nice handwriting) zine. And it talks about bands more than Underdog.

Green Pajamas "Ghosts Of Love" (Get Hip) I don't *not* like this because it's the pussiest sounding record ever on Get Hip, I don't like it because it's boring.

Gun Barrel "Power-Dive2" (SPV) A-FUCKING-MAZING Metal Rock that sounds like Lemmy joined Motley Crue to write a bomber pilot theme album. If you don't like this you are stupid. Or I am.

Gunfighter "High Noon" (Idol POB 720043 Dallas TX 75372) Guns a-groovin' with maximum rockcity! Bang!

Margo Guryan "Take a Picture," "25 demos" (Franklin Castle 7510 W. Sunset #217 Hollywood, CA 90046) Wow. Believe the hype. I always figured this would be one of the records you heard was great but since it was pretentious, arty folk who liked it, it wouldn't hold up. Not the case here, the breathy vocals, rich, pretty, inventive, lush arrangements, and seductive upbeatness of these tunes is genuinely enchanting. Listening to this you're drawn to the speakers like Wimpy in a Popeye cartoon when the smell for a hamburger makes him float in the air towards his object of obsession with eyes closed, awash in a look of bliss. If you're some record collector god who has a copy already, this includes some demos, and the accompanying release features a mess more. More a songwriter than a singer despite her sexy voice (if only America had a Serge to become obsessed and champion her she woulda been a household name) these represent some real pop gems. They're nice and short too, and lushly spare if that's possible. The "Sunday Morning" demo is a bit funkified. How the hell did Dianne Warren become a zillionaire when this woman is unknown? Includes a too pretty Nixon novelty song. Note this is a subsidiary of Oglio, an amazingly unclassy label (they released the farting superhero CD) so this is a shockingly classy release!

Hammerlock "Barefoot and Pregnant" (Steel Cage POB 29247 Philadelphia, PA 19125) Redneck Soul music, with deep (just short of Sabbath) grooves (just short of Southern Boogie) and tobacco juice dripping vocals. Scary, yet inspiring.

Ben Harper & The Innocent Criminals "Live From Mars" (Virgin) I don't know why Ben Harper doesn't sell as much as Dave Matthews and the suckier jam bands. His tunes, especially on this live double CD, are plenty long (averaging 6 or so minutes) and the guitar playing jams, but maybe there's too much subtlety and soul in the voice and perhaps the jams mix acoustic subtlety and deep funk too complexly. Whatever the deal, he's not my cup of tea, but he's way the fuck better than Pfish, so when will he get paid?

Hava Narghile: turkish Rock Music -1966-1975 (Bacchus) Sorry, I want to rave about this, but though there are a few killer tracks that combine rawness with Eastern aesthetics, there's too much dull stuff here, just middle of the road boring stuff. If you've ever travelled to other countries I'm sure you've experienced finding LPs where then band looks like The Third World version of The Standells or the monks on the cover, but the tunes are tepid Andy Williams fair (with minor local flavor). Not as psyche as it promises.

hawd gangstuh rahpuhs mc's "wake up and smell the piss" (Load) Slip Slop Flip Flop Shit Shot Hip Hop. Way better than everything else. Or is it?

Sophie B. Hawkins "Timbre" (Ryko) She sings pretty and writes better than many. She's kinda melodramatic. There's a bold, sexy love song sung from woman to woman, but there's also a universality to most everything here. Damn!

Heavenly "Heavenly vs. Satan" (K) A reissue of this fantastic delicate, lush indie pop benchmark. It's a different thing from most K type stuff because there's no rough hewn no D.I.Y. shoddiness, this is slickly perfect. But the sheen is endearing as enchanting.

Henry Fiats Open Sore "Makes Your Cock Big" EP (Rocknroll Blietzkrieg POB 11906 Berkeley, CA 94712) Top 3 monkey songs for the new century has to include "No Damn Escape," one of my fave "Planet of The Apes" songs ever. Basically, as this label specializes in absurdly furious punk trash, there's no surprises here as far as savagery, but there's a refreshing amount of flavor injected.

hey, mister comix (Top Shelf) Pete-Sickman-Garner does self contained epic narratives that are nasty, funny and disconcerting. One of my fave comix.

The Hives "Hate To Say I Told You So" (Gearhead POB 421219 SF, CA 94142m. gearheadmagazine.com) Dynamic Rock and Roll with some serious riffage isolation that makes you FEEL it, baby. I mean FEEL it! Extremely tuff!

Kelly Hogan "Because It Feels Good" (Bloodshot, bloodshotrecords.com) Hogan sheds "Insurgency" altogether for a soulful, perhaps even Southern Soulful, but definitely non-Country excursion into eerie luxurious Carpenters-in-a-creepy-cabin-Pop. Beautiful and seductive for the most part, this is genuinely weird sounding stuff that's just off center enough to always leave you guessing if these love songs will lead you too bliss or that bed in the movie "Misery."

Hot Water Music "A Flight And A Crash" (Epitaph) Slickly raw, dripping with desperation, this is oddly tanned suede to the standard Black leather of most punk.

H2O "Go" (MCA) Does for "Wet" what Sammy Hagar did for "Red!"

Glenn Hughes "Building the Machines" (SPV) On of the unheralded super voices of Classic Rock goes for the modern classics with powerful tuneage about the pressures of the supermodern. He's declaring war and he's gonna win!

Iawaska "Vine Of Souls" (Alternative Tentacles) OK, this looks like it sucks, the raw cover art makes it seem like this must be New Age epic Metal/Folk. But then you hear 10 seconds of it you know exactly why Jello must have jumped the second he heard this: It sounds like Poly Styrene of X-Ray Spex fronting a Crustcore band that grew up on a hippie commune but listened to Crass and Hawkwind instead of CSNY. The content, the weirdness, the texture, everything is outstanding. You should definitely seek this out.

Icons Of Filth "The Mortarhate Projects" (Go Kart) Go Kart is reissuing any release associated with Conflict, and these were their touring mates. Peace punk/Crust tunes by dudes named Stiggy Smeg, Hunky Punky and a few less vaudeville-esque monikers. It's easy to forget how brutal and powerful it was when punk bands sang about ending nuclear proliferation rather than high school girlfriends. I admit to being cred deficient when it comes to having ever heard any of these EPs or cassettes

upon initial release, but I'm glad to have this now, and the fact that the English Crusties could take no baths and fight for peace without becoming hippies should be constantly championed. These songs are perfect examples of a lost, awesome genre.

Iffy "bioto bondo" (Foodchain 8490 Sunset Blvd. Suite 504 LA, CA 90069, lightyear.com) A clinical Tom Tom Club, which is still pretty hip thing to be.

In Decay "fuck yall" ep (Tent City 175 5th Ave suite 2341 NYC 10010) Very impressive, pleasant.

Inner Muscle zine w/Disgruntled Nation 7" (POB 8681 Missoula, MT 59807) Actually, it may be the other way around, this zine came with the record. Either way it's a good fit. Both the vinyl and the xerox xine are completely in tune to an understanding about what the hell punk rock actually is. The zine has some great international found love documentation, respectable reviews/interview (not boring, which makes it better than MRR) and best off an essay on 80s hardcore geography (which bands were from and what that meant) that I really dug. The record is brutal, with some real-assed drumming.

Inspection 12 "In Recovery" (Honest Don's, honestdons.com) Despite having all the cliches of 90s pop punk, this CD has a bubblyness and a texture that really makes it stand out. It makes you happy...and it makes you think.

Internal/external "inside out e.p." (K) Makes the mellowest Stereolab sound downright omery. This is pleasant chill-ocity at it's pleasantly chilliest.

International Playboy zine (\$1?, 3636 Broadway PMB 103, North bend OR 97459) Matter of fact rants and occasional raves about punk rock, vasectomy and conservative issues (anti-Liberal, pro-gun, welfare). It's all honest, and the best part is Bob uses logic that is officially un-right, yet in many ways infallible. For example, he concludes his diatribe against elitist liberal's canonization of Bob Dylan buy positing, "it's fairly obvious that no one could actually enjoy his annoying nasal whine..."

The Irving Klaw "Pajama Party" (Get Hip) It's time for a new generation of Happy Hookers. the old time heart of gold streetwalker stereotype has fallen out of favor of late and we miss it. Luckily this band has now provided a soundtrack for jolly sex work, and if "Turned Out USA" doesn't get the industry out of its doldrums, I pity the American John.

Isabelle's gift "alcohol, tobacco and firearms" (Jimmy Frank's) Though this arguably rocks, it is glaringly Good free.



Is It Dead compilation (Crash Rawk/Sub Pop) Mercilessly brutal Metal/extreme music comp from the Northwest features bands I've never heard of but now fear. Hollywood Mike Miranda seems like a pretty unhardcore bandname but they will chill the blood in your veins. Lots of thick nasty plodding stuff, but also a great variety on here, like Teen Cthula (terrifying speed stuff), Bothc's Math-Metal and Raft of Dead Monkeys getting by on bandname brutality before even playing a note.

Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back (Universal) Has comic interludes between songs, so this is the rare soundtrack that's not only not rocking but also not funny.

Jerk With a Bomb "the old noise" (Scratch 726 Richards St. Vancouver BC Canada V6B 384, scratchrecords.com) Fans of Nick Cave B.H.S.L.N.D. (Before he sounded like Neil Diamond) will enjoy the texture and flavor of this impressive record.

The Jimmy Jazz Revival Unit demo (shpilles @ hotmail.com) Scrambled my eggs!

The Journal Of Madness (\$3.99, 7420 Calhoun Dearborn, MI 48126) This issue of the best of the Mad Magazine fanzines features some unnervingly amazing interviews/correspondences/stories with/about Wally Wood that are as revealing as anything I've read about the E.C. art stable.

Junior and "Friends" comix by Peter Bagge (Fantagraphics) These reprints from *Neat Stuff* and other sources have likely been read by many of the people who want to read it, but even though I have the old comix I never read them and if I wanted to I'd have to find them and dig them out. So basically it's worth \$3 to not have to go find them again.

k. "new problems" ((Tiger Style, 149 Wooster St. 4th Fl. NYC 10012, tigerstylerecords.com) Kosher! A little more sensitive then my tastes usually run towards, but I was happy this was on when it was on.

Kant B Caught "Caught Up" (Knock Out) Laid back, but hard as hell hip hop with a fine flow.

Kathy McGinty (Hamburger 1909 S. Halsted Chicago, IL 60608) Techno porno pranksterism in which several porno phrases are loaded into a sampler and lonely tech heads are urged to call and have phone sex with a real live girl who is actually (unbeknownst to them) a robot. As the pranksters get more bored and start getting goofier (playing the moans like a human beatbox, cutting calls short, and at some point the self-description sample goes from "I'm 5' 2", blonde hair, nice tits, and a wet pussy" to "I'm 5' 2" blonde hair, and I'm in a wheelchair). When sad people are really masturbating it's kinda sad, but there definitely are some amazing moments here.

The Keepers Of Jericho; A Tribute To Helloween (Arise c/Somera, #45 48005 Bilbao-Vizcaya Spain, euskalnet.net/arisemetal) You can't fuck around and cover a Helloween song, you have to be ready to go to the mat for excess, absurdity and conviction in the ridiculous/epic/melodramatic. There are plenty of the bands in this Wide World of Metal that are up to the task, and this doesn't disappoint. Heaven's Gate's heavily accented English warblings on "A Little Time," Metalium's brutal speed version of "Ride The Sky" and (my fave) Dark moor's eerie take on "Halloween" are only a few of the gems here. Hell -o- yes!

Kelly Kessler and the Wichita Shut-ins "4 songs 13 minutes" (kykr @hotmail.com) Land's sakes, that's purty!

Kill Your Idols "Funeral For A Feeling" (SideoneDummy 6201 Sunset Blvd suite 211 Hollywood CA 90028) Unrelenting, furious PopHardcore (if such a genre exists).

King Brothers (In The Red, intheredrecords.com) This is the sound of your inner demons letting you have it. The ability to be so RAWK yet also exist as an ethereal nightmare simultaneously is eerie.

The King Normals "Hey Little Girl" ep (Hillsdale POB 641592 SF, CA 94164) These mops are tops!

The Kingsbury Manx "restless minds" b/w "drift off" (Sit-N-Spin 302 Oak Ave Carrboro, NC 27510) Sleepy.

Nikolo Kotzev's "Nostradamus" (SPV) I love excess and absurdity as much as (ok, much more than) anyone, but this double CD rock opera telling the life and times of the big N (starring Glenn Hughes [Metal G.H., not the late Village People leatherman G.H.]) combines the most mediocre aspects of classical and 80s adult rock to create the most tedious 2 hours in recorded history. You'd think Nostradamus would have seen this coming.

Last Of the Juanitas "The Jay" b/w "Blues For Planet Mars" (Wantage USA POB 8681 Missoula, MT 59807) The way you know this heavy slab of ROCK ponderings is the real deal is that they do a Sun Ra cover and they understand it!

Latitude 22 "Give Your Attitude Some Latitude" (Razzled) G-r-o-o-o-v-y music makes you feel s-o-o-o good!

Landing Oceanless (Strange Attractors Audio House POB 2827 Olympia, WA 98507) Spaced "Out"...yet zoned "In." Ambienelia that's thrillingling chillin'.

Lazycame "Finbegin" (Hall of Records, hormusic.com) Jesus and Mary Chainer William Reed gopes solo and makes music so relaxed and fey you can't believe he can hold the microphone in his weakened, sensitive state. But it's good.

Leatherface "The Last" (BYO POB 67a64 LA CA 90067) Less hooky late Replacements style stuff that's not afraid to hit the ROCK OUT button.

Len Brown Society "It wasn't the smoothest time" (galaxia POB 380 Santa Criz, CA 95061) After some ambient tablesetting we get the sensitive coffeehouse version of the Beasts of Bourbon...relatively pretty and quiet but with disturbing undercurrents.

Lennon "Saturday Morning" (Arista) The worst record ever.

Leonardo - The Absolute Man original cast recording (Magna Carta) A rock opera telling the life and power of Da Vinci that succeeds in many ways where the Nostradamus rock opera I received at the same time fails (see separate review). Instead of trying to combine tepid adult contemporary with classical this fluctuates between New Age and commercial Prog to achieve the absurdity and majesty a project like this should have. Rush is a fantastic template for a rock opera. Artists here display so much conviction and self-importance that you have to give this a chance, and it works. There won't be another JC Superstar anytime soon, but this picks up the theatrical rock excess ball and runs with it, and the groove is great. Too bad they didn't work in David Allan Coe's "Mona Lisa Lost her Smile."

Les Pauls & Breaking Glass compilation (Sin City/Coldfront) Music so ugly it's pretty...or as I prefer to say, PRETTY UGLY! Super fun drinking and fighting tunes from all your faves including Bellrays, Dead Boys, Street Walkin' Cheetahs, Toilet Boys and more.

Jerry Lee Lewis "Wild One" b/w "High School Confidential" (Norton) MUTHATHUMPIN. MUTHA-HUMP-IN... Killer, you need to KNOW that "Wild One" ain't that pussy-wimp Bobby Revell or Bobby Dinton or Bobby Dee, a whole flock of Bobbies they had, you see, but when I wasn't tryin' to push that Paul Anchor over a bridge in Australia to fish out Little Richard's diamond rings, I heard this boy named Johnny O' Keefe do this song...I thought it was great, but I knew I could do better. Hell, I always say that when I hear a great song. I told Sam, "It's a hit, Mr. Phillips, it's a hit!" He said, "That ain't no damn hit, boy." Well, it WAS a hit 30 years later for that strange cat, Iggy Pop...Hell, we don't even use sissy words like "pop" or "soda" down south, everything's just a COKE. Iggy, he's good, but I'm great, case closed. There's also a different version of "High School Confidential" than the one you've already played so many times, I trust, that you can see right through it, sorta like that one top I saw Mamie Van Doren wearin' on the movie set...SHOOT! Son, did you SEE her in *High Society* with Julie Strain? If I'd-a known she was gonna hold up THAT good, Hell, I mighta married her myself! I tell you one thing, son, and that is a guar-an-tee-red fact, if God made anything better than a woman, he kept it for himself. Huh? Whassat, hoss? What's all that got to do with Rock'n'Roll, you ask? If you don't know, you need this record more than I thought!

The Lies "Resigned" (K) This band should be called "The Yawns."

Like Hell by Ben Foster (Hope and Nothings) Anyone familiar with Ben Weasel's MRR columns knows that he certainly has the writing skills to communicate what he wants to say, but that what he wants to say is usually whatever will piss off the reader and make him/her hate the writer. Thus, a pseudo-autobiographical novel about a character with a nearly identical career to Weasel's and vaguely familiar hybrid punk icons has to overcome one mighty obstacle: it's a book where you hate the main protagonist. It has some flaws, all the sex scenes just sound like bragging, and the growth the character is supposed to go through doesn't seem significant, but this book isn't not pointless, boring or painful...and I've read some seriously pointless, boring, painful prose about punk band life. This actually (along with several other books reviewed this issue, including *Dance Of Days* and *Wipe Away My Eyes*) helps give shape to the historicization of 80s and 90s punk, and with the MTVization of everything, that's going to be fairly valuable in the future. Of course, the great irony of this book, is that it describes some elements of the lifestyle accurately (car trouble, eccentric fringe characters, etc.) but the general misery of the lifestyle portrayed here is due in a large part to the antisocial, misanthropic attitude of the character/writer. Someone who LOVES people and the scene and all that crap can tour the same venues and get joy and strength from the same things that cause this guy pain and agony.

Chris Ligon "Crazy Dazy" (Record roundup) I don't know too many geniuses, but after listening to this I'm pretty sure I know, at the very least, a reasonable facsimile of one. Ligon brings the kookiest carnival to your headphones and gives you free ride

tickets and cotton candy until you're gloriously sick to your belly.

Limecell "If We Can't Rock it's War" (Steel Cage) Raw asswhooping "Death To Rapcore" manifestos. Lots of bonus tracks including a hippie-to-yuppie diatribe that's great.

linus of hollywood "let yourself be happy" (Franklin Castle/Oglio) Like the Beatles, but not as good. Covers an Ozzy ballad as if it were on Apple records, and that was smooth.

Jeff London "Col. Summers Park" (Jealous Butcher POB 14306 Portland OR 97293) Reminds me of Paul Williams' sensitive Muppet Movie work ("Rainbow Connection still resonates!").

Los Straitjackets "Sing Along With..." (Cavalcade/Yep Roc) The concept here is that some "name" singers sit in with North America's fave wrestling masked instrumental band, and boy do they get names! There's some Latin flavor with Big Sandy, El Vez and even the Trashman hollering in Spanish. Mark Lindsay, Exene, Nick Lowe (his axe is his vox, of course) and other superstars also take advantage of the ultimate Karaoke opportunity to turn out a super fun album. This will be great at your next party!

Loud Times Video Magazine Issue 3 (Inzane) Believe it or not, take the sluts out of a Matt Zane video and it's almost interesting. Interviews with Slipknot, Korn, Machinehead (who sound like they're holding pot in their lungs as they answer questions) and a long S.O.D. reunion live sets are highlights. And then there's the fat guy from Crowbar doing minor mayhem (tearing down a bathroom towel dispenser, for example) while wearing full Incredible Hulk green body makeup.

Low + Dirty Three "In The Fishtank" (Konkurrent) The latest in this series of semi improvised, low pressure "Fishtank" records (the Holland label has touring bands do anything they want in their studio while in town and then releases it) two bands who I have a lot of trouble appreciating are as dull and quiet as ever. But their legions of fans may love this. See, I like AC/DC "High Voltage."



Lucyfire "This Dollar Saved My Life At Whitehouse" (SPV) Simple a wonder of musical nature/unnature, this is as excessive, lurid and corrupt a Rock album since early Crue, without being Metal at all. Rather this is a rock cliché wonderball, an UNDENIABLE force. Listen for a strange teutonic drawl not heard since Laibach's heyday!

Lunachicks "Babysitters On Acid" (Go Kart) A reissue of their raw, dumb ass record that deserves attention again because raw, dumb ass music always ages well. Beastiality, the Brady Bunch and babysitting are as stupid subjects now as ever and I honestly haven't pulled this LP out in so long that I was really moshing again to it.

Lupine Howl "The Carnivorous Lunar Activities Of..." (Beggar's) Slinky Psych with stadium classic rock hookage and flavourful seasonings.

the lyndsay diaries "remember the memories" (The Militia Group POB 18A129 LA.. CA 90007) A fine dry whine.

Mad Caddies "Rock The Plank" (Fat) Now that less bands have horns these guys sound better again. Very Rocket From The Crypt in a good way, this definitely chugs out some rawk.

The Mad Capsule Markets "OSC-DIS" (Manga/RykoPalm) A dance punk revolution combat training film soundtrack that fires bullets at a zillion bpm.

Makeshift #2 compilation (\$8, Makeshift POB 40043 Memphis, TN 38174-0043, makeshiftmusic.com) This started out kinda slow, with a lot of bands being a tad dull for my tastes, but about

halfway through this compilation of Memphis bands the whole thing explodes, with the spooky Lost Sounds giving way to the killer American Deathray, the awesome Mouserocket and the intriguing Delorean. Overall, there's some great, diverse stuff here, much like the variety of BBQ sauces this fine city offers.

Malade De Souci "novmmb r aign" (cb intl) If your car is starting to sound the way this sounds it would cost you a million dollars to get it fixed. Yet if you found the right sonic appreciation person they'd pay you two million to leave it as is. Maximum mathetetical stutercroty.

Michelle Malone live (Schuba's, Chicago) There's a thin line between Good and Slick. Watching rocker Michelle Malone and her band I had to admit that her voice was strong, her backing musicians were studio-quality and the club was unusually packed. But I guess I'd rather listen to something interesting than something pro. I'm still on the fence about her cover of "9 to 5", though. The audience was a curious mix of fraternity and sorority alumni with down-to-earth lesbians. But then, I guess an Indigo Girls or Melissa Etheridge show would attract a similar demographic, but I could do without Kappa Kappa Kappa guys and gals.

Manatees "Snackin' with the Manatees (Orange, Orangerecordings.com) Sub-aquatic instrumentality that invokes gluing your feet to the board and surfing upside down. Genius is a word with too few letters to describe this.

Manic Hispanic "The Recline Of Mexican Civilization" (BYO) The hook here is that punk tunes are recast with Latino themes, but it's usually just a few words changed (If The Vatos Are United) and there's nothing musically clever. When El Vez (coming from the same LA punk scene) does the same thing he makes multiple musical puns, that reference 70s punk, Elvis and Chicano culture, and there's usually several levels of each in every song, plus cover art that makes two or three more references. To be out done by an Elvis impersonator is kinda bad. As far as straight punk covers this is good, but it's not too successful as humor.

The Masochists by Nick Bertozzi (Alternative Comics, indyworld.com/altcomics) Beautiful human tales of cruelty and weakness presented in comic form with quiet narrative elegance that recalls the best Chester Brown. There's also an empathic portrayal of the grotesque, abandoned and lost that recalls Clowes' top writing, minus the attitude. Very elegant, yet very brutal.

Kneli Mattus "Blue Dot" (Residential Limbo) My girlfriend ikes Lenny Kravitz' slow stuff, and she LOVED this.

Colin McGrath and the Killing my Lobster Orchestra "Allegro Con Chutzpah" (Killing my Lobster POB 170309 SF CA 94117, killingmylobster.com) A multicultural goolash of instrumental atmospheres ranging from klez to bolero to swing to who knows what, with good humor and playfulness.

David Mead "Mine and Yours" (BMG) One of the rare recordings that gets better and better the quieter you play it. I saw this guy on TV and he shakes his head around like a porcelain baseball player bobble head, which offsets this solid, yet precious, pop very strangely.

Media Whores "Feel It" b/w "Can You Keep A Secret?." "1984" b/w "Cult Of Thy Psychic Fetus" (Break Up) Two singles with four songs that answer many questions asked by N'SYNC's new "Dirty Pop" single about the nature of "this thing that we call pop." From Power Pop to Pussy Pop to Rawk Pop to Scary Pop these Whores demonstrate how "the game" is to be played. So hate the game, not the players. Or the whores.

Joe Meek's Groups "Crawdaddy Simone" (RPM) I think it's safe to say that though we know a lot of what Joe Meek was into (and there's probably a lot of stuff he was into that we really don't want to know!) there's a whole lot less discussion about what stuff he didn't dig. With his amazing atmospheric recordings of instrumentals and his passionate capturing of pretty and tortured voices of pretty and tortured young boys and girls, there's a lot to discuss without getting into the stuff he did that wasn't really his bag. But when he was in his heyday the Beat/R&B scenes were ruling and he of course dipped into that pool and this CD compiles some bands that Norton records would be digging up self issued 45s of if they were from Minnesota and not Jolly Old England. While there are less Meekisms here (though a few creep in...check out The Syndicates "On The Horizon" for Meek weirdness) the fact remains that despite his efforts some rawness and charming minstrelsy shine through on Blues covers by the Syndicates, The Puppets, Tony Dangerfield, The Blue Rondos and Bobby Rio and the Revelles. The title track is a turbo boosted skiffler

with a drum and guitar break that sounds like planes taking off. It's worth seeking it out just for that, but there's other gems as well, including The Puppets' almost Chipmunks-esque "Poison Ivy" and The Blue Rondos' convincing "Baby I Go For You."

Me First And The Gimme Gimmes "Blow In The Wind" (Fat) Cleverness from the #1 pop punk wedding band includes "Sloop John B" becoming the Ramones' "Lobotomy." Muslim gags for a Cat Stevens tune, Clash riffs where they're unexpected, and a bunch of straight pop covers. I'd hire them for a divorce if I ever I get me a husband!

Mensen "Delusions Grandeur" (Gearhead) Rough and raw ladyrunk that demonstrates not only the ability to rock the house, but the skills to likely win bar fights.

Messages: Modern Synthpop Artists Cover OMD (Oglio) "Modern" meaning "Retro," but "Retro" meaning "Futuristic Music as Done In The Past." And who better to dig OMD than futuristic backwards lookers like Macondo, Colecovision and House of Wires.

MHz "Action Figure" ep (Flying Bomb POB 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197) This record actually blew my stereo up with Detroitamite, and then repaired it with groove glue. REAL!

Michael Jackson HISTORY by Adrian Grant (Omnibus) The fakest interview ever accompanies some genuinely absurd photos. Yet Michael Jackson is still the all time greatest. Go figure?

Micro-Blast/Mreowkblast comix zine (mreow.com) Magical, wholesome, youthful skating, mischief and cat stroking comix that are a real pleasure to dive into. I highly recommend going to the site and finding out how to get your hands on these.

Microphones "THE GLOW, pt. 2" (K, Box 7154 Olympia, WA 98507) If you have any rock hearing loss you may not even be able to detect that this record is playing. (It's q-u-i-e-t...)

Migala "Arde" (Sub Pop) If you're driving around in the American West this is the music for you...then again, if you're listening to this music then you are driving around in the American West. Dig?

The Mighty Hannibal "Hannibalism!" (Norton) Without hesitation I will declare that this is the best record Norton, one of the most consistent labels in history, has ever put out. I'm not even sure how to talk about it, but without exaggeration I have listened to this 50 times already. The CD version starts out with some hot late 50s-early 60s R&B. I was pretty much digging it, thinking, "Here's some solid, fun stuff." The things shift gears a little with track 13 (I believe that's where the LP starts) a live performance from a Nashville TV show, a solid version of "In The Midnight Hour." Then it's ON! "Hymn No. 5" (1965), dripping with pathos, is a Gospel fueled song about a G.I. in Viet Nam lying in a foxhole, covered in blood, knowing that "there's no tomorrow," thinking about how good a father he tried to be and wondering about his children's future. This, and many of the remaining tracks, represent some of the most serious, stark, real Soul music you will ever hear. Portraits of Viet Nam, drug addiction, prostitution and poverty are presented not as romantic toasts but as visceral urban reports. Drawing from street preacher sermon tradition (the amazing "The Truth Shall Make You Free, 1972), Country Soul (on 1973s moving "Party Life"), and Southern Soul (the funky "Get In The Groove, 1970) these are breathtaking. Even the less message oriented upbeat dance funk (Hannibal was a soul brother to Joe Tex in more ways than one) is outstanding. "Fishin' Pole," and "Good Time" are impossible to not groove to, "Shame Shame" is as good as a prime Johnny Taylor record, and the unreleased tracks including the Sam Cooke-esque "Over At Mary's Place" are better than 93% of records that got released the years this stuff sat on shelves. This is the real stuff; a man with a great voice doing genuinely moving music (extremely strong material) from the best eras of Soul and R&B. This release is monumental and I hope a zillion people groove to this.

Ming & FS "The Human Condition" (OM 245 S. Van Ness #303 SF, CA 94103) I usually like my dance music more Homo than Pomo, but this is the exception (that proves a rule somewhere) where I was endeared to the cleverness of the pastiche but still actually moved something. And kept moving it.

Minibar "Road Movies" (Universal) Pop far too pleasant to expect from a big fancy major label.

Tanya Mitchell "I Represent" (Universal) I wish success on everyone, but if this is a hit pop/dance record it won't be because there's any good songs on it whatsoever. Even though every song sounds exactly like it was lifted from something on

the radio (Kandi's writing style and even Prince's "Do Me Baby" are pilfered) most of the writers have Jewish names, so at least the Brill Building tradition is returning!

MOD --- A Very British Phenomenon by Terry Rawlings (Omnibus) The potential fear was there---that a book like this could be either a dry tome or a poorly-written cash-in from the perspective of someone whose only reference point would be the 2-Tone movement and the Quadrophonia flick. Rawlings gets over, under, through and around that shit to get to the meat, and we're all the better for it. What's best about the book is that the things we've come to expect are here, but the author also takes unexpected side trips down various subcategories and subgenres. Record fiends will love the Top 10 music lists in the back; clothes hounds will dig the vintage fashions; gearheads might get a kick out of the scooters; and curiosity seekers in general will love the shot of a young Steve Marriott (then with the Small Faces) standing next to Diana Ross (in her Supremes heyday), shitting his pants with excitement. A later chapter on the post-punk Mod revival paints a fairly dreary picture (who was it that said, "Too much time trying to look cool and not enough time being cool?"), but the mirror doesn't lie---Rawlings took the facts and held them up for all to see.

Moke "carnival" (Ultimatum 8723 W. Washington Blvd. Culver City, CA 90232) Guitar pop rock magic that s'moke's!

Mondo Grosso "MG+" (Epic) Whatever the opposite of Mondo is (Mino?) that's how much soul this has. Stutter mellow groove stuff that doesn't contain any magic.



The Monkees Live (House of Blues, Chicago June 13, 2001.) I saw The Monkees in '86 on their first reunion tour. It was entertaining as all get out, but they didn't stray too far from the dozen or so hits known to the casual listener, the backing band was a little wet behind the ears, and the boys did little to prove that, yeah, they can play their own instruments. All that has changed. This year's Monkees emerged not as a tired nostalgia act, but as a hard working, versatile unit, committed to giving the music the respect it's earned, though seldom received. In the course of two solid hours, they served up plenty of lesser known gems, and while they gladly did the hits, they took their sweet time getting to them. It was a show for FANS. Still, looking around, I felt a bit out of place, as most of the people there looked like they merely walked over from that yuppie haven, Rush Street. Apart from a few guys who looked old enough to have forgotten the 60's, I was about the only guy there who didn't look like I had my hair cut weekly. No matter, The Monkees, with their personalities and their "We give a damn" spirit, made me feel like it was all for me. Songs? For starters, "Randy Scouse Git," "Goin' Down," "She Hangs Out," "Circle Sky," "Your Auntie Grizelda," "For Pete's Sake," "Papa Gene's Blues," "Take a Giant Step," (Look Out) Here Comes Tomorrow," "Do I Have To Do This All Over Again," "The Porpoise Song," and "Can You Dig It?" I knew that you could. Between the still-great rapport and comedic strengths shared between the three, not to mention the fact that they really sing their asses off (okay, we all know Tork, like Ringo Starr, was never a Caruso, but he carries himself in such a way that sincerity wins out over technique. Anyway, he plays a pretty mean axe, and he played it a LOT, as did Dolenz behind a full drum kit, not those toy drums he had on the '86 tour.), I found myself thinking, "Yeah, it'd be great if Nesmith showed up just about now, but I don't miss him THAT much". Mickey Dolenz even had the chutzpah to do a few of Mike's songs, and a damn fine job he did. Besides all that stuff, the group did a strange Bluegrass/Reggae/Pop take on "(Your Love is Lifting Me) Higher and Higher" that could've been a hit before Rita got to it. Peter did a heartfelt tribute to Little Richard (with some stungin' Southwest Texas styled guitar). Mickey did a song from his pre-Monkee days (Not "Don't Do It," alas, but a smoky rendition of "Since I Fell For You"), while Davy wowed 'em with a flyvly take on "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby" that,

for all it's music hall trappings, still had more cojones than the average modern Swing band. AND that song he sang on "The Brady Bunch". He told some good jokes, too ("In my day, boys liked girls, girls liked boys and only Tarzan swung both ways!"). Man! Those Monkees entertained the livin' SHIT out of me!. They're not the "young generation" (physically, that is), but they've still got something to say. See 'em on this tour, if you can, it's purported to be their last..

Moods For Moderns "Loud And Clear," "Slacker Wings" ep (Doghouse POB 8946 Toledo OH 43623) I suppose it's redundant to say this grooves like Shoes or Raspberries with a more rust belt veneer to it, but I think the original Power Pop (pre Power Pop Punk by decades) was so Beatles lovin' you couldn't hear the Midwest in it enough, and this fine "Oooh Ooh" stuff definitely conquers that. Loud and Clear indeed!

The Moto-Litas "For The Greater Good" (Daemon) If you thought this was going to be a female equivalent of the primitive pop band M.O.T.O. ala The Headcoates, think again. This is Fed Up Lady rock, as opposed to Angry Woman Rock, which would RAWK more. This is the kind of slick post-Indie stuff that you'd really like if you related to the stories...You might say, "That is sooo true!"

Moviola "Rumors Of The Faithful" (Spirit Of Orr POB 381869 Cambridge, MA 02238) Don't get me wrong, if you're on a steady diet of AC/DC this might not be for you. But if you can get into the subtle, pleasant natural melodies of a quiet summer by the lake (or in, say, a cornfield) than this will make your day, it made mine...and it made ewe want some corn. Which I can pop and eat at the moviola. That must be how they got their name. Well anyhow, it's a real good record.

Murphy's Law "The Party's over" (Artemis 130 Fifth Ave. NYC 10011) Furiously asserting their cred (they threaten to beat you down in "an old school fight" on the first song) this is prime New York hardcore that gets "Rock" but doesn't get "Metal" and seems more honest than goonish.

Mushroomhead "XX" (Filthy Hands/Eclipse) I bet these guys were fucking pissed when other Metal/Rap/Futuristic/Primitive ensembles wearing, insane masks and costumes got HUGE, but maybe naming yourself after a fungus didn't sound like a million dollar idea to the suits at the big labels. Well, for what it's worth, this is definitely better music than all the other masked Rage Rockers, but the other bands are abysmal, so that doesn't mean much. Still, this definitely has a husky, Midwestern flavor, and I hope they blow up. And I want a mushroom pizza.

The Musician's Joke Book by N.J. Croce (Schirmer) OK, some of these are pretty specific to their niche ("What's the definition of a real nerd? Someone who owns his own alto clarinet." "How do you get a cellist to play fortissimo? Write "pp. espressivo" on the music.") but for the most part these are some hilarious jokes...even the bad ones! I passed a copy on to my pal Ratso, a puppet who hosts a local kids show, and he's been cracking up the crew. Here's some gems: "Why do bagpipers march while they play? They're trying to get away from the noise." "How many drummers does it take to change a lightbulb? None, they have machines to do that now." "What do you get when you drop a piano down a mineshaft? A minor flat." "What do you call a drummer without a wife or girlfriend? Homeless." "How do you get a rock musician off your doorstep? Pay for the pizza." I have to stop typing...I'm laughing too hard!

My Fat Irish Ass zine (\$1, POB 65391 WDC 20035) The zine not afraid to be abusive to its readers.

Mystechs "Unholyland" (Omega Point POB 2451 Chi IL 60664-2451) Not so much disco, as pure, unashamed, spare electronic New Wave sonic paintings. Infectious.

Mystic "cuts for luck and scars for freedom" (GoodVibes, mysticworld.com) Mystic is one of the smoothest rappers out right now, and her fantastic debut combines beautiful singing with honest MC skills to create some brutally real autobiographical tracks. Listen for "The Life" and "Girlfriend Sistagirl" to catch on. Normally I wouldn't expect something this good to have a chance, but with the Jill Scott type stuff selling I think Mystic is gonna get a shot, and when people hear this they will respond.

Naughty Bits comix by Roberta Gregory (Fantagraphics) Despite Bitchy Bitch being so visually extreme a character, and so filled with hate for all the bullshit she has to deal with, the appeal of Gregory's work has always been how adult and "normal" it is. Bitchy holds down a job, Gregory coos over cats, and her problems are everyday problems. The long narrative in new issue about Bitchy's inner child is a strong story, but there's some inferior filler in here. It's hard making a comic, I guess.

Willie Heath Neal & his Cowboy Killers (Cargo) Dusty cowpoke Country that's fun enough to forgive any forced twang and slapbass happy enough to make you want to two-step. Hell, I'll three-step to these upbeat laments!

The Neatbeats "Mercurial..." (Get Hip) Beat wasn't always something you did on the beat, it was at one time a scene that spawned the best musical action in German pubs since Lotte Lenya was showing her wares. Beat revivalists the Kaisers and the Dukes of Hamburg no doubt took the scene that spawned the Beatles and the monks seriously, but noted the absurdity at the same time. These be-suited Japanese beatsters are playing it straight, and it's well appreciated

Nerf Herder "My E.P." (My POB 41730 Santa Barbara, CA 93140) There's a thin line between clever and stupid and a thinner between stupid and dumbass. And this is it.

Nerves "World Of Gold" (Thrill Jockey) Sparely heavy lurking troglodyte music...if troglodytes listened to Doors albums and went into the studio with heavy album oriented Rock aspirations. And could play a mean guitar!

New Disorder Soda compilation (New Disorder 115 Bartlett St. SF, CA 94110) Genius raw absurd-core punk from a few dozen visionaries. Outstanding: Los Rabbis, The Bananas, Lugosi and What Happens Next?

The New Scheme zine (POB 19873 Boulder, CO 80308) Better than the old scheme.

New Town Animals "Is Your Radio Active?" (Mint, mintrecs.com) It's a Pogo and Pop Rocks party, where everyone has a sugarbuzz and a skinny tie!

Nineteen Forty-Five "Together We'll Burn Like Autumn Leaves" (Daemon P.O. Box 1207 Decatur, GA 30031) This doesn't sound exactly like anything, but it sounds great and fans of (post)punk based sensitive pop will dig. "Cemetery Gates" is a sure top ten hit in a reasonable world.

Nocturne (Triple X Box 862529 LA, CA 90086, triple-x.com) Veruca Salt style vocals over lurking evil music that is more organic than you'd expect. Creepy.

No One (Immortal/Virgin) Rage Rock that's more like an angry pebble.

No Motiv "diagram for healing" (Vagrant) Though this bands name can be scrambled to read, "Vomit on," I would never actually vomit on this record. It's got "drive!"

Not So Quiet On The Coldfront comp (Coldfront) Zillions of songs from all flavors of punk from poppy absurdity to downright ugly. My faves are McRackins, Vindictives and Moral Crux, but the kids will dig Wesley Willis, Divit and the other dozen or so bands as well.

No Use For A Name "Live In A Dive" (Fat) Triumphantly dumb non-hardcore punk with nice EC horror comics graphics and enhanced concert video footage.

O&O records: the Center Of The Universe (POB 36 Ft. Collins CO 80522) Sampler worth sampling. I like Bad Astronaut, Armchair Martian and Shiner best.

The Odd Numbers "The Trials and Tribulations of..." (Coldfront POB 8345 Berkeley, CA 94707, coldfrontrecords.com) I've got an odd number to describe this... #1!

Old School Beat zine (POB 227 Morrisville PA 19067) Blaxploitation funk and Atari and arcade era video games are I.O.V.E.D in these pages.

Old Time Relijun "witchcraft rebellion" (K) Genuine conjure get-downs, with legitimately interesting texture and flavor. Definitely not music to try to describe, so trust me that it's good. Cause it's good.

Tara Jane O'Neil "in the sun lines" (Quarterstick) Hypnotism music with some sweet sung incantations springily scattered

One Time Angels "sound of a restless city" (Adeline 5337 College Ave #318 Oakland, CA 94618) Heaven is a place on earth...and these angels loved earth radio in the 80s

Opposable Thumbs comix by Dean Haspiel (Alternative Comics) With an intro by Harvey Pekar I expected yet another series of autobiographical comic stories that explore the

mundane and the inner workings of everyman. I guess when the protagonist artist portrays himself as a self-mutilating, crack taking, clown painting, orgy attending ass kicker then it's not exactly mundanity being celebrated. And none of this is done in angst, but rather as a kind of funny regular dude/frat guy boasting hybrid. Interesting.

Organic "Flag" ep (Microcosm 7741 Ohio St. Mneotor OH 44060-4850) Not organic like hippy crunchy but organic like a focused punk spirit.

O.T.E.P. "T.R.I.C." b/w "The Lord Is My Wagon" (Capitol) OCRAP.



Our Band Could Be Your Life by Michael Azerrad (Little, Brown and Company) There's a proliferation of books out now about 80s and 90s punk/hardcore, but this one is the biggest gamble: a totally mainstream book by a 'real' publishing house that will be considered a financial failure if it sells copies to every single person who bought records by some of these bands. Commerce aside (if such a thing can be said about a book about Indie movements), this book is pretty interesting on the merit of its contents. Each chapter tells the story of a different icon/band from the indie and/or punk scenes of the early 80s to mid 90s. Using 1984 as the key year when he feels the best material was released, and then working from either direction, Azerrad really is successful in painting portraits of the whys and hows of these different figures. The best move he made was not devoting ink to lengthy describing songs and music and lyrics, he rather chooses to really tell the stories. The best chapter (and the first) is Black Flag, because they may be the band with the most fucked and interesting history ("...the rumor [was that Robo] had been a soldier in the notoriously corrupt Colombian army...") and they were really the template for American Hardcore. What I was pleasantly surprised with is the appreciation of actual punk and hardcore. I was worried that as a Husker Du fan he might be ready to approach Indie Rock rather than raw punk as the Gospel, but the author really respects what's different about all the bands rather than trying to make a straight line between Minutemen, Minor Threat, Sonic Youth and Mudhoney. If I was only going to recommend one book about 80s-90s punk out of the current bushel released this summer I might lean towards *Dance of Days* because of its focus on one scene, but if someone didn't know anything and wanted a schooling, or was invested enough to buy two books, this is definitely worth trumpeting.

Outtakes by Chip Rock Dayton (Studio Chikara 244 Fifth Ave. #2464 New York 10001) This book of KISS photographs taken by a fan as he was making the transition from amateur to semi-pro photographer is a truly amazing package. Clearly the concert shots of the highly visual band taken at a time when their youth, enthusiasm and gusto were glowing taken by a man with a camera whose youth, enthusiasm and gusto were just as bright are fantastic. But better still is the spare text, as Chip's story is told and through his emerging relationships with the band, their families, the management and the fans we get a unique portrait of what the world of KISS was like as they were on the rise to superstardom. More so than many of the KISS books out there, this is a must for Army members, as both the visuals and the story are fresh and exciting.

Ox "Don't Call Me Lazy" (Allegory PMB 228, 11024 NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111-3962) Substantial chugging Psyche Rock outlets that seem to come from some magic space mountain

Ozma "Rock and roll Part Three" (Kung Fu POB 38009 Hollywood, CA 90038) I like all Kung Fu bands because all the boys are always cute, and that's far more important than many scenesters would have you believe. This band has a cute lady too. And good songs.

Pagans "Shit Street," "The Pink Album" (Crypt) Cleveland is better than Detroit punkwise, if only for these motherfuckers. The Pagans spent the six most important punk years (1977-1983, all represented here) making as good Rock n Roll rooted punk as anyone in the fucking world, and nobody cared. This stuff falls really neatly between the stupid ass New York punk (Ramones, Thunders) and the smart New York punk (Richard Hell, Max's bands). Awww fuck New York and let's say this falls between Dead Boys and Pere Ubu. The dumb is cuz the rock here is sloshing and nasty, but the sharp songwriting, perfect texecution, and even the drunken mumble approximating an English hooligan seem to give away that these guys completely knew what they were doing. These amazing collections, with great liner notes, add several million extra live tracks and rarities at the end of each reissue CD making this beyond a good value. If you don't buy these you might as well sell all your records except Billy Joel, because that's all you deserve.

The Paladins "Palvoline no. 7" (Ruf, rufrecords.de) No bullshit here. Clever old school country-isms ("Alcohol Of Fame") and folks good at everything from Country to Western.

panic strikes a chord "how to ruin a perfectly good thing" (anechoic) The word "genius" doesn't have enough letters to describe this.

Parker and Lily "Hello Halo" (Orange) You could scream profanity laced death threats at the top of your lungs at me for hours and it would not frighten me even a minute percentage of the way that even a minute of this very quiet, subtle, seriously creepy album does. It's like some ominous music box playing in a gothic horror movie; you don't know what it means, but you know something bad is gonna happen.

The Partisans "So Neat" ep (TKO 4104 24th St. #103 SF, CA 94114) A genuine bootstomper!

Peanut Butter and Jeremy comix by James Kochalka (Alternative Comics 503 NW 37th Ave. Gainesville, FL 32609-2204) Did you ever wonder what your cat was thinking as it flops around and hides under the chair after you scold it? If not, don't buy this comic.

The Pedestrians "An Evening At Pear's Hurricane" (Dionysus/Bacchus) Another glorious entry in the "release everthing ever" category! The Peds were a Tucson teen punk covers that played at a dive and had a good recording made of a set once...and here it is! The sensibilities of the act (and the hair and cheekbones) make them pretty outstanding for bar rockers! Contains everything from Nuggets 60s covers to Ramones and Iggy covers, to the John Cale creep out version of "Heartbreak Hotel" to Wire. Patti and Devo go-at-it to genuinely strange originals to a version of "Batman" where they make up lyrics about Robin in high school and dating catwoman. Definitely not run-of-the-mill this is fun and fucked!

The Penetrators "Locked and Loaded" (Double Crown) Penetrating is an understatement. These fellows take the soundtrack surf concept to the next "wave."

Robert Perry "A Soundtrack For The Wheel Of Time" (Magna Carta, magnacarta.net) This is a soundtrack (or, I'd say, an adaptation) for some fantasy fiction books by Robert Jordan. Now, I don't read or like fantasy stuff with the horses and swords and quests, so I'm not the ideal audience. Basically, all I read is the obituaries and anything by Pamela Des Barres. That said, this CD certinly captures some mystical spirit and paints a pretty picture.

Pete. (Warner Brothers) Torturously bad.

The Phantom Limbs "Applied Ignorance" (Alternative Tentacles) Creepy calliope music for the kids of freak show performers to rebel against their parents by listening to.

The Philistines Jr. "Analog Vs. Digital" (Tarquin 2403 North Ave. Bridgeport CT 06604) If you really liked college...and I mean *really* liked college, this is for you. Contains a solo feast at the end that's more a box of chocolates with different flavors in them than a wank fest. Pretty design work

The Pinchurst Kids "Bleed It Dry" (Barbaric 1809 7th Ave ste. 411 Seattle WA 98101) This music desperately, unyieldingly urges you to like it and I comply.

Pinhead Circus "The Black Power Of Romance" (BYO POB 67A64 LA, CA 90067) I'm not sure what they're talking about but I'm convinced that it must be very urgent!

Pirx the Pilot (New Disorder 115 Bartlett St. SE, CA 94110) Monotone-esque monkey music.

Pistol Grip "The Shots From the Kalico Rose" (BYO, byorecords.com) Pub. football chant punk Oi magic that can't help but make you wish you had a pint and steel toed boots and some enemies. This actually has political content as well (as much as you can have without putting down your Guinness).

Playing For A Piece of The Door: A History of Garage & Fat Bands In Memphis 1960-1975 by Ron Hall (Shangri La Projects). **Playing For A Piece of The Door: A History of Garage & Fat Bands In Memphis 1960-1975 CD** (Shangri La Projects) From the fine folks at the Shangri La record store in Memphis comes this nice project that puts faces, personalities and narratives to those little black petroleum products record collectors covet so. Every Memphis Garage single you ever heard of, and bunches you didn't, are featured in this quaint book, with the stories of every teenage band, or variation thereof, that brewed their music in the Memphis Soul-A-Billy stewpot. By avoiding the 50s when the Sun hadn't yet set on the DA and blue suede shoe scene, and boldly going well into the 70s, where few collectors venture, this book features some amazing info and fun stories. The CD companion has a wide array of good rocking ultra-rarities, though the sound isn't perfect...but imagine you're listening on your teenage kiddie record player with a ceramic needle and you'll be able to groove to The Jades, Danny Burk and the Invaders and the Rapscallions, genuises all. And don't get me started on the outer limit vibe of Jimmy Tarbutton and the Memphis Sound. Outtathisworld!

Plea For Peace; Take Action compilation (Sub City) A literal ton (perhaps several tons) of bands that the kids and the grown ups like (including The Ataris, Seam, Bratmobile, TSOL, Alkaline Trio, At The Drive In, AFI and The Eynelers) donate mostly great rare/unreleased/live tracks to benefit a helpline (1 800 Suicide).

Pleasure Forever (Sub Pop) One word: "DRAMA!"

Polarbearvixen zine (1515 N. Ainsworth Number 14 Portland, OR 97217) Wrasslin' and AC/DC and Bruce Campbell worship zine that is more focused some issues than others, but loses nothing when it becomes gloriously lowbrow dada-istic.

Popaganda - The art & subversion of Ron English (Soft Skull) English's paintings, many of them installed as uninvited public art (as part of his "Billboard Liberation" movement) combine the humor of a prankster, the PoMo appropriation of a Hip Hop DJ, and the surface slickness of the best Side-Of-Van airbrush artist ever ("Grateful Dead imagery...no problem..."). The most "important" work here may be the billboards because the act of covering a paid advertising billboard with "art," often (but certainly not always) overtly political, is really significant. English's Liberation Front addresses (amongst other things) keeping abortion legal, homelessness and marketing cigarettes to kids. The latter is a fave of English because the concept of sinister agendas being furthered by using seemingly cute, cartoonish characters hits close to home. His paintings (the non-billboard ones) are twisted hybrids of comic book imagery, rock & roll icons, Disney characters and porno posturing. It all looks "adorable" and feels "wrong." So wrong, in fact, that it's so RIGHT! Perhaps the most amazing work in the book is a series of *trompe l'oeil* photograph/painting hybrids in which depth and scale are fucked with by painting something realistic, putting it at a convincing angle so as to look "real" in a photo and then mixing real people in so that seemingly impossible giants, monsters and weirdness become "reality." It's hard to describe, but totally worth seeking the amazing book out to experience.

Positively 4th Street: The Lives & Times Of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Faez Farina, and Richard Farina by David Hadju (FS&G). Even if you're not into the early sixties New York folk scene, they had the Rock & Roll Attitude (as we now know it) down cold, long before the rock kids latched on to it. The folk crowd then, far removed from the kleen-cut hootenanny world of the Kingston Trio, would sit around swapping songs and fuck partners and liberal viewpoints, all while waiting for a new day to dawn. While this book uses the music of the four musicians mentioned in the book's title as an anchor, the amount of research that Hadju devoted to the intertwining personal lives of these musical friends and lovers is astounding. Dylan (and to a lesser extent Richard Farina) were spin doctors in their own right, wrapping the whole folk world around their fingers. I would include their fellow artists (and lovers) Joan and Mimi in that number. Dylan eventually went to revolutionize the rock scene; Richard Farina, frustratingly, died in 1966 (motorcycle accident) just when it looked like he'd do the same. Joan stayed in the picture doing more or less the same folk stuff she's always done. Mimi continued to record sporadically but basically became a footnote. The book gives it

to you in better detail than I could. But why aren't there any tales about Dylan's affair with soul/gospel legend Mavis Staples? And how a territory-marking Joanie did her damndest to stop it?

Spike Priggen "The Very Thing You Treasure By..." (Lazy Jane) Priggen is friggin' awesome! Poetic guitars paint a dramatic pop picture.

Prime sth "Underneath The Surface" (Giant) Prime jive.

Pullman "Viewfinder" (Thrill Jockey) This is a "faith" listen for me. I have faith in Thrill Jockey that this must be pretty good, but to be honest I'm not vibing on it at all and if this was background music in a movie (or an elevator) I wouldn't notice it. But that must mean I'm stupid...I mean this is Thrill Jockey! And I'm actually not being facetious.

The Quarrymen by Hunter Davies, (Omnibus Press) As the cover blurb will tell you, the Quarrymen were "the skiffle group that started the Beatles." John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison went on to greater success as 3/4 of you-know-who. The rest all receded into different walks of non-showbiz life (although Pete Shotton worked for a time as Lennon's "personal assistant"). Probably the best thing about this book is the lack of regrets. Every book or article I've read about people from the Beatles' world (from former drummer Pete Best on down), all have that telltale "shoulda-woulda-coulda" vibe, as if their lives never really recovered. While the remaining Quarrymen were not immune to the Beatles and their fame (how could anyone, in the sixties?), they seem remarkably well-adjusted. No bitterness about not being the Chosen Ones To Make It, no lingering dreams of what might have been---these men got on with their lives. And author Davies did a good job of capturing that. I never thought I'd want to peep another Elvis/Stones/Beatles book again; the jury is still out on the former two, but **The Quarrymen** is a great bit of Beatle backstory that held my fickle interest.

Quasi "The Sword Of God," "Early Recordings" (Touch and Go) The callopie at the smartest circus in the world would do well to sound like the new Quasi "joint." Though a times it numbs you a bit, it jolts you right back with hums and tones recorded on instruments that sound like enchanted toys. Both of their voices are hypnotizing (even on the rock-out material) and I mean *actually* hypnotizing as in: you feel like you're in a trance and you lose several minutes. The reissue of a compilation of early 90s recordings has several moments of equal or greater hypno-vibes (with an emphasis on "VIBRATIONS") as the new stuff. It's all very narrative sounding, even if you can't follow the story.

Radical Cheerleader hhandbook zine (Box 961 Lake Worth FL 33460) The Radical Cheerleaders are brilliant! Punk Feminist ideology disseminated in the form of cheers, with splits, jumps and "whoos!" intact. Reclaiming the terms, "Be aggressive, be be aggressive" and "ready, O.K.!" is a triumph! The zine is a classic xerox, hnadwritten and mixed font cut n paste job that's funny and dead serious and matches the tones of the Cheerleaders just so.

Radio Birdman "The Essential Radio Birdman (1974-1978)" (Sub Pop) There may not be a second on this thing that doesn't sound like it couldn't be from yesterday or tomorrow. People have been saying that Radio Birdman is underrated so long that now they're saying that they are overrated for being called underrated, but I think that they aren't overrated, they're still underrated *and this fucking rules...end of story!*

Rainbow Sugar "At Risk youth" (POBox 481644 Denver, CO 80248) I caught them live recently, and imagine if Caroliner was a crude all girl rap act with punk guitars and you might be able to get in the ballpark or imagining this wild cat. Whew....!

Raw Noise "The Terror Continues" (High Speed) Brutal with an emphasis on "brute" this perfectly combines the anti-nuclear bomb themes of our fave band of yore with the best Earache-isms of cookie monster vocals and evil, bludgeoning guitar attacks.

Amy Ray with the Butchies and Danielle Howle (Live, Ladyfest Midwest, Congrass Theater Chicago) The Butchies are SO good. Just because they like girls more than boys doesn't mean I can't mention that they are super beautiful, which doesn't hurt for a live act. But far more importantly they rule music-wise! The drumming is so good, and her stage presence and is something else. Also, she throws in drum solos left and right...ending sets with them even! The vocalists both sing better harmonies than any punk band ever. Really remarkable stuff. As the back up band for Amy Ray the dynamic of them playing with someone whom they hold in such high regard is

fantastic. They have such love and respect for her, yet Ray is definitely being fueled by their youth and superpowers tremendously and the combo is tough assed rock n roll magic. And when Danielle Howle, she of angel's voice, joined them for a few tunes it was too much. Whew! Definitely one of the best shows I saw this year.



Readymaid "jets from the beginning" (Monumental) Mellow and groovy yet also groovy and mellow.

reagan national crash diet "administration" (RoosterCow POB 578174 Chicago, IL 60657) I'm totally for a return of Reagan bands so this act has points even before I press play. However, this doesn't sound like early 80s punk, but that's not necessarily bad. Textural seriousness without math or science or P.E. overpowering the English Lit

The Real Kids "Senseless" (Norton) A live show from '82 that'll knock you dead in '02! This is one of those live recordings where you can smell the bar, taste the beer and your hair gets all smoky smelling. This seems like a short set when they start winding up, but then they bring it home with a *filthy* version of "All Kindsa Girls" that's gloriously longer than "Aqualung" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" combined! I don't know what the hell is going on, but I'm satisfied (and stupified).

The Real McKenzies "Loch-d & Loaded" (Honest Don's) Being Scottish is a better gimmick for a band than being sensitive or straightedge or pigs and clowns as far as I'm concerned, if only for the occasion to hear someone play the bagpipe at hardcore punk speed.

Red Alert "Wearside" (High Speed, highspeedrecordings.com) The best bar band guitar playing you could hope for with lyrics thought out and enunciated more than the music would suggest it should be.

Red Monkey "Gun powder, Treason and Plot" (Troubleman Unlimited 16 Willow St Bayonne, NJ 07002) Red Monkey delivers strikingly urgent jazzpunk, and really shakes you up. This seems really important.

Red Planet "Let's Degenerate" (Gearhead, gearheadmagazine.com) I would be exaggerating if I said I thought this was super amazing great and awesome, but I can honestly say that when I listen to this it is so clearly the work of a band that would be *totally* a blast to go to a club and see. I know exactly why this record exists, if I heard this band playing these solid slabs or rock pop (as opposed to pop rock, or Pop Rocks®) I would put their record out, and I don't have a label! They fondle Van Halen LPs on the back cover, but the solos here are crunchier than weedly, though clearly the joyfulness of DLR is appreciated and understood. This smells like beer, but unlike, say a Detroit trash Garage 7", it does not additionally smell like vomit.

Reducers SF "Crappy Clubs and Smelly Pubs" (TKO 4104 24th St. #103 SF, CA 94114) Not Oi! Proper, but sure as hell Oi! Enough!

Reign Of Terror "Sacred Ground" (SPV) Where hast all thee Guitar Gods goneth? Ask no more, as this CD features solos ablazing in a manner thought lost. Epic is an understatement

Restraining Order "last time you took me back" (PO Box 2720 Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004) These gents could develop a quirky college following somewhere and I hope they do. Humorous, pleasant, odd (almost Canadian...check these guys work orders) pop.

Retail Whore zine (\$2, c/o K. Raz 5741 N Ridge Apt 3nc Chicago, IL 60660) Two of the purest forms of zinism are the personal zine (where someone just lays it on the line) and the theme zine (where someone focuses on an obsession, be it a type of food, an actor or a tape format). This combines those two in a wonderful way, as the theme of working retail is fully explored.

but not championed (as Dishwasher zine does the subdusting lifestyle). Rather, here you get to listen in on the thoughts of the pissed off, vitriolic wage slave as she rings up your stupid book and CD purchases. And not only do you eavesdrop on her hatred for her yuppie customers, but also on her actual life, which she's audacious enough to ponder while on the clock. The writing here is exceptional, and K. paints a vivid picture of her positive and negative moments as she is challenged in her quests for health, love and enough money to survive.

Rise Against "The Unraveling" (Fat) Hardcore speed and grooves but with a wholesome, slickly recorded veneer. This band should rule the rock world within 6 months.

Rival Schools United By Onlinedrawing (Some 122 W. 29 St. 4th NYC 10001) A whinier and wankier Cheap Trick, which is still a hell of a compliment.

The Rondelles "Shined Nickles and Loose Change" (K) Supergood Phil Spector Wall of Sound type Candy Pop recorded with a Wall of Radio Shack equipment and chicken wire.

Dexter Romweber "Chased By Martians" (Manifesto 740 North La Brea Ave. 2nd FLA. CA 90038) The Flat Duo Jet manages to be significantly creepy while bringing Rockabilly based music back to the gutters where it belongs. His writing is clearer and more focused than ever... in the way a lucid serial killer can express himself so well.

The Royal Fingers "Wild Eleki Deluxe (Del Fi) Supersonic surf and drag from the land of tsunamis and bullet trains (thus the waves are bigger and the speed standard is higher). Often modern surf is lo-fi or has retro production values, but this thing is produced to sound so big and in-your-face (not in a Metal way, this is all authentic 60s surf sounding) that it really is overwhelmingly great.

Rufio "perhaps, i suppose..." (The Militia group POB 18A129 LA, CA 90007, themilitiagroup.com) Ruf to listen to.

Rural Life Standard (PO Box 433 Monee, IL 60449) A broadsheet dedicated to stopping the proposed Peotone airport and other grassroots efforts. Fight the good fight brothers and sisters!

Saga "House Of Cards" (SPV) Regressive prog with candy coated keyboards and strained epic-ness. I love absurdity as much as the next sucker, but this isn't twisted enough.

San Geronimo (Coldfront) Yecch. Very competent, but I don't buy (or maybe just don't dig) the emotiveness.

Eric Sardinias "Devil Train" (evidence100 E. Hector St suite 392 Conshohocken, PA 19428) Eric looks like the Roadhouse Rico Suave and his Blooze voice is godawful, but something about this is so absurd that it's pretty amusing. Honeyboy Edwards guests.

Sardine zine(DS1, c/o Denise Dawes Von Kizer POB 22086 Charleston, SC 29413) Novelty fish as Dada chaos/savant genius manifesto fodder. A bible of sorts.

Savatage "Poets and Madmen" (Nuclear Blast 1453-A 14th St. #324 Santa Monica, CA 90404) Absurd! Not only do Savatage once again do a storytelling concept album (it's all they do, of course) but this actually opens with a Spinal Tap druid intro about storytelling. Of course, I LOVE THIS RECORD!

Saves The Day "Stay What You Are" (Vagrant) I call this review "Saves The Dollars." Don't buy this. I guess it's poppy OK, and the musicians sound like they can go to work, but the dude's voice is grating and I don't believe him when he urges his "feelings."

Ken Saydak Band "Love Without Trust" (Delmark) Simultaneously unexceptional, yet filled with exceptional musicians, and charming despite middle-of-the-roadness. THIS is not a bad Blues album, bad blue albums are AWFUL, and this ivory tinkling is far from bad, but this is not a particular Greta Blues album any way you slice it.

Scapegoat Wax "Okeebow" (Grand Royal, grandroyal.com) Like having the Jurassic 5 personally sing back the top 9 at 9 on B96 top 40 radio in June 1985.

Scared Of Chaka "crossing with switchblades" (Hopeless hopelessrecords.com) I don't love every second of this, but there are moments, and several whole songs, where the glorious desperation of true American Garage rock is captured in youthful glory, and that's a real treat.

Art Paul Schlosser "Reinventing myself" (\$12, 523 West West Wilson #203 Madison, WI 53703) A raw, confident slab of outsider music in which Art Paul's simple songs are transposed from guitar to a keyboard he is just learning to play, and Art explains the process of learning between tracks. A unique experience, and fans of Wesley Willis, Daniel Johnston and the Shaggs should take note.

Scram magazine (\$4, POB 461626 Hollywood, CA 90046) One of my favorites: absurdity, obtuseness and music magic done up Left Coast style.

The Screws "Shake Your Monkey" (In The Red) Murky, lurid, decadent Rock and Roll monkeyhouse shenanigans from Mick Collins and Co. I hear Mick can't drive, but he sure can steer!

Season To Risk "The Shattering" (Owned and Operated POB 36 Ft. Collins, CO 80522) Though this is very likely quite a high quality, moving, powerful recording, I am too hung up by the fact that it is no fun at all to actually appreciate it.

The 2nd Hand zine (2641 and a half N. Spaulding #15 Chi IL 60647) You gotta love words.

Semiautomatic (SRC POB 1190 Olympia, WA 98507-1190) This will b-l-o-w your m-i-n-d!!! Tasteful ambience with some PoMo genre hopping, providing good karma.

Shea Segar "The May Street Project" (RCA) Mellow grooves that I guess are supposed to have 70s funk symphony lushness or something.

The Shams "Take Off" (Ornange, ornangerecordings.com) If the Velvet Underground had taken funner drugs and listened to Nuggets bound 45s a little more, they *might* have made something this good!



Michael J. Sheehy "Ill Gotten Gains" (Beggars) Acoustic moaning of the Country Blues is the base ingredient, but then all kinds subtle futuristic touches make this all the more haunting.

The Show Volume 1 video (SideOneDummy) An hour of clips from an LA based TV show (I'm guessing leased TV, not public access, because it seems pretty commercially skewed towards Sideonedummy) where Epitaph/Fat/Sideonedummy era punk bands get interviewed by Joe the host and then we see live clips or videos or both. Highlights include a good H2O video, a good AFI interview, a good Kill Your Idols clip and an absurd 7 Seconds concert.

Shpilkes conux by Frederick Noland POB 12253 Berkeley, CA 94712) Expressive nasty ink tells expressive, nasty stories of low lives and lost souls. The recasting of "Stagger Lee" with an all white cast was a little weird, but it was a really visceral telling. Overall one of my favorite comix this year.

Sick On The bus "Set Fire To Someone in Authority." "Punk Police/Suck On Sick On The Bus" (Go-Kart POB 20 Prince St. Station NYC 10012, gokartrecords.com) I'm a chump ("a fucking tosser" as SOTB might say) because I never heard of these dudes before, but these are no doubt some seriously punk, joyful joints. The double CDs is better because it's bigger, but the "Set Fire" record is furiously amazing as well. Everything's shit...even me. Truth if ever I heard it.

Sidewalk Slam! "Two Steps Forward, Five Steps back" (Boot To Head), "Past Remains" (Tooth and Nail) As good as any other pop punk band, though a little uglier, making them seem a bit more legit. They also show brief glimpses of the ability to play hardcore, which is a nice trick to have up your sleeve.

The Sights "Are You Green" (Fall Of Rome POB 69431 LA, CA 90069) Frug furiously! Heavy bubblegum rawk!

The Silos "Laser Beam Next Door" (Checkered Past) I have this girlfriend and she likes this CD a lot and always plays it and,

like, dances around to it, and it *totally works* if you know what I mean.

Simon Says "Shut Your Breath" (Hollywood) If there's only one reason (and there's more) to say "FUCK KORN," it's for instilling the concept in the brains of the clone sheep hordes that whining lyrics is somehow hardcore or scary or aggressive.

Six Feet Under "True Carnage" (Metal Blade) Prime brutality with extremity abounding. Ice T makes a guest shot, which is funny.

16 Horsepower "Hoarse" (Checkered Past) A live performance in Denver, a city which inexplicably has very good used records available, making for an audience receptive to the rich, eclectic Pomo-Rural vibe of this band.

The Sketchbook Diaries by James Kochalka (\$7.95, Top Shelf P.O.B. 1282 Marietta, GA 30061-1282) Kochalka drew an autobiographical diary "strip" every day for a year, and while I can't say the content is necessarily impressive (there more often than not isn't a narrative flow from one entry to the other) the actual process and labor and execution is *very* impressive. Kochalka really gets both his visual and his writing chops honed up pretty nicely by really completing a solid piece every day, and if you look at this as a sketchbook (which it is) rather than as a comic or narrative (which it isn't quite) you can appreciate what's happening here. If you're not a fan of JK this won't help, but if you're a devotee this is a can't miss.

Skinhead by Nick Knight (Omnibus) I'm happily surprised to see this book of photos of skins taken in 1980 is still in print. Brutal, beautiful images of lost, vacant souls, some embracing their community, some covered in blood. I always thought they used really big print not so much to pad out the spare text, but to make it easier for dumb-assed skins to read the Dr. Seuss sized font.

Slayer "God Hates Us All" (American) If you forgot they were evil they remind you every line with lyrics your mom won't like and brutal music that reminds me of the early days when their stage banter was simply "(in a guttural tone) 'S-A-T-A-N-N-N-N..." Instead of "Hello Chicago!" I guess they've regained an evil edge. Beware!

Slowpoke comix by Jen Sorensen (Alternative comics) This collection of strips has some boss cultural satire with some really funny writing. Sorensen's slick graphics get the point across, and the comedic rhythm delivers more zingers than klinkers. The recurring characters aren't exactly going to be challenging Garfield for window stick-on merchandising. Drooly Julie the sex hungry lady is kinda original, but not hilarious, and the designwork on Mr. Perkins is "challenging." But overall this chock fulla chuckles.

Slumber Party "Psychodelicate" (KRS) I once saw a video tape of some woman Pop singer in the 60s on a TV show and the song she was lip synching to was incredibly beautiful (as was she) but she was so stoned that the virtually catatonic motionlessness performance seemed to still be too much for her to pull off. Yet you knew if she didn't live like she did, ludes and all, she likely wouldn't be in the position to have made that record. I have no idea what drugs Slumber Party takes or doesn't take but this record captures that enchanted fragile, snail's path prettiness of that lost TV performance from 35 years ago. Heavy, man...yet so light.

Smartbomb "Yeah. Well, anyway..." (Razor and Tie) Better than N'Sync! It really is!

Keely Smith "Keely Sings Sinatra" (Concord 2450-A Stanwell Drive, Concord, CA 94520) Dear god this woman can sing! If you don't buy this you are very likely a very stupid person.

(smog) "Rain on Lens" (Drag City) Pleasantly creepy. Yet creepily pleasant.

Smogtown "domesticviolenceland" ep (Disaster) cigarette and Guinness addled indignance.

Smoke (POB 27663 LA, CA 90027) Impressively evil Stoner Rawk that smokes em cause it gots em!

Snapdragon "Family Jewels" (Straight Line/Atlantic) Yecch. But *almost* not "yecch."

Snuff "Blue Gravy" (Fat, fatwreck.com) When did these dudes start sounding like The Replacements? Snuff is a band that keeps seeming like they're better than I thought, and I always thought they were good.

Solex "Canciones Robadas (Afehop) The international language of caveman (or in this case, cavegirl) punk! Primitive yet the most futuristic thing I've heard this year!

Soulsville U.S.A.: The Story of Stax Records by Rob Bowman (Schirmer)

Most books or journalism about this era and region and label take *Sweet Soul Music* by Peter Guralnick and repeat or embellish. This great book takes off from a whole new template. Bowman tells the story of the rise and (more interestingly) the fall of the great Southern Soul label. He paints a pretty convincing picture after '68 when they left Atlantic and took things too far, too fast like Vee Jay in Chicago did before them. Read about the back alley maneuvers that ended the Stax story prematurely. Some of this material is repeated from the Stax box set notes (which Bowman wrote), but there's plenty of stuff here that goes beyond the music. He tells about the people that made the hits, but there's also plenty of behind the scenes wranglings. On the one hand the heroes are Otis Redding during the early years and Isaac Hayes during the later years, both men being the unofficial symbols of Stax success in their respective eras. But one of the best aspects is the championing of the staffers for marketing R&B when there was no such thing as marketing R&B, leading to Wattstax, and new approaches to Black magazine advertising. This remarkably thorough book will leave you with no questions.

Soundtrack To Summer (Beggars, beggars.com/usa) I don't get the Badly Drawn Boy, but Brassy, Scanner Funk and Tindersticks should make a few BBQs and sunburn sessions more fun. I'm pretty sure, though, that "Bootylicious" was the song of the summer, and it's not on here.

South Philly Street Fight comp single (see Carbon 14 review) Given away in the latest issue of Carbon 14 this has some of the best Rock & Wraslin' songs since Classy Blassie hit the studio.

Sparechange00 "Fifty thousand moments" ((Cargo) Worst Bon Jovi cover band ever.

Speak No Evil "Welcome To The Downside" (Universal) Play No Music...please!

Spirit Caravan "Elusive Truth" (Tolotta POB 4412 Arlington, VA 22204) Cleansed in the heavy liquids of hot, soapy, black Sub-bathwater, this deserves to be incanted towards.

Spitfires United "Live At The Black cat D.C." (Burn-one.com, 125 N. Main Street suite 402 Port Chester, NY 10573) This is an awesome CD because I couldn't decide if it was an Oi parody band (in which case it wasn't absurd enough) or a real Oi band (in which case it was too absurd, but not in an unusual way). I guess the fact that they say they're from D.C., but talk in thick Cockney accents and sing about Guinness and WDC's major League Soccer team tip towards the former, but whatever the deal, the fact that it confused me makes it great.

Spreadin' Rhythm Around: Black Popular Songwriters, 1880-1930 by David A. Jasen and Gene Jones (Schirmer Books) This book provides an excellent overview of the contributions African Americans have made to American popular music at a key historical moment. As sheet music sales became a lucrative industry at the turn of the last century, songwriters in and around Tin Pan Alley sought to place their songs in theatrical musicals, and to sell them on paper in dime stores across the country. Jasen and Jones show how Black songwriters such as Ernest Hogan, Bert Williams, Will Marion Cook, W. C. Handy, Noble Sissle & Eubie Blake, and many others navigated (and in many cases succeeded) in the highly competitive field of popular music publishing. Tracing the careers of at least two dozen Black songwriters of the era (with many biographical details), the authors provide a rich and vivid picture of the many challenges facing Black artists during this period -- from casual racism to deliberate black-balling by theatrical and publishing impresarios. At times, the authors seem to downplay the glaring contradictions involved when these Black songwriters -- many of whom had middle-class backgrounds, were highly educated, and committed to Black "uplift" -- wrote "coon songs" and other fare that contained glaring stereotypes and inauthentic Negro dialect. Of course, they wrote these songs to make a living in a white-controlled industry catering mostly to white tastes. But too many times the book seems to downplay or rationalize the prevalence of such material, without exploring how Black writers of these songs must have struggled with this problem.

Spying on the New World Order (?) (c/o Karen Bender POB 8691 Columbus, GA 31908-8691) I'm not even sure what this is actually called, let alone what it is. An 11 x 17 manila sheet of paper with tiny printing on every inch of both sides and lots of

international intrigue, strange sporty cars and lesbian romplings. Again, I don't know what this is, but I like it.

Stalin Claus Superstar (Spam PON 21588 El Sobrante, CA 94820, spamrecords.freesevers.com) Ouch! Four CDs and about 3 and half hours or so of semi-coherent, multi-generational, absurdist "Rock" "Opera" action. The narrative has something to do with Hulk Hogan, Retin-A, and thousands of years of conspiracies and Wagnerian epic-ness. The second CD is the best (I think that's the one where the Hulkster loses control and unleashes on a Make-A-Wish Foundation kid), but it's all a surprisingly listenable, nonsensical frolic. And really, why say something is 10 minutes when you can say it in 4 hours? I think it only costs \$12 or so for the whole thing, and it's worth it just to find the hidden Humpty Hump sample.

STATICeden "receiver" (12352 Guelph Line, RR#1, Campbellville, Ontario LOP 1B0) Music for courting a robot alien princess on another planet during a full moon.

Stella Soleil "dirty little secret" (Universal) Mediocrity run amok is neither dirty or a secret.

Stereolab "Sound-Dust" (Elektra) Dusted me! If Italian superhero spy movies had more soul this could be on the soundtrack.

"Stomp: Northwest Killers 1960-1964," "Shout: Northwest Killers 1964-1965," "Work It Out: Northwest Killers 1965-66" (Norton) There's no doubt about it, Northwest garage trash rock is one of the purest, most powerful, most inspiration distillations of the essence of the religion that genuflects in front of Link's pen poked amp. Eddie Cochran's death car and every brewery on earth. I won't even attempt to convey the historical, hysterical breakdown of the individual highschool/dropout/garage dreamer band members here (the liner notes do it too well) but I will say what's awesome: The first volume is the best because there's less Beatles R&B via Europe and more real American Rock n Soul vibe going. Also, the subject matter proves the worthiness: werewolves, monkeys, potatoes and chitlins are worthy muses if anything is! "Shout" is solid and really has some of the most danceable vibes if you like REALLY moving! The third volume starts out with some true, wild killers, but eventually it seems to settle. JohnPaulGeorgeRingo had established the idea of maturity as a viable element of Rock n Roll, and thought the NW lunkheads were resisting, it starts to shine through with less savagery being captured. Still, you'd be a fool not to buy all three of these albums...this is the bossiest sauce you can pour on your stereo!

The Strap-Ons "Geeking Dream" (World Label Cooperative POB 9152 Va Beach, VA 23450) Retard Bar Rock Punk that stuns and stupifies.

Sugarcult "everybody's talking about blowing up the neighborhood..." (Ultimatum) Rocked my cavities!

Summer Hymns "A Celebratory Arm Gesture" (Misra) The Nuggets box set and all the Monkees tunes rewritten from fuzzy memory by an early 90s indie band.

Sunburn comics anthology (\$3, POBox 2061 Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R4 Canada) This long running comics anthology (though not necessarily currently running, the latest issue I have is from 2000) is an intelligent, well produced, dignified presentation of an international array of amateur comic artists of widely varying levels of talent. Political, cultural commentary mixed with druggy freakout stuff mixed with bawdy humour guarantees something for everyone to like and lots of other things for everyone to think sucks. Certainly worth the low price just to encourage those involved.

Survivor Newsletter (c/o Monica Evans 1115 45th Ave. long Is City, NY 11101) Libertarian, pro gun, clipzine with a psycho-Subgenius vibe.

Swag "different girls" ep (Space Baby) You can either covet this record because it's a 10" picture disc that looks like one of the 1901 picture records, or because it's better than the Beatles. It's a Pick 'Em.

The Ted Bundys "Look What We Dug Up, Some More Porn Rock" (Jefro POB 1408 Lincoln Park MI 48146) More like a snuff film than a porno, this is sinister and frightening. Beware!

Ted Leo/Pharmacists "The Tyranny Of Distance"(Lookout) His name might be Leo, but I bet he's a Pisces...he's so emotional and dreamy!

Tenacious D (Atlantic) At its lowest the humor here is "What if Beavis and Butthead grew up and started a band?" But is that so bad? The comedy bits have some real moments, especially

"Inward Singing," in which J.B. explains to K.G. how he has invented a new way of singing that revolutionizes rock. Best song is the ballad/rap/rocker "Double Teain" about a three-way.

The Texas Governor (archenemy POB 802 Allston, MA 02134) Pretty and small grooves making up the sonic equivalent of a pleasant, nocturnal landscape painting.

30 Second Felch zine (1660 Bloor St E #501 Mississauga, Ont L4X 1R9 Canada) This is great hybrid of a clip zine and a real research mag that passionately tells the stories of the punk/trash/rock icons of interest to the editor. The swiped supplemental text (seemingly from every interview done by a rocker in a 70s Canadian porn mag) really helps. Actually this whole thing is a little too panned up for my tastes, but in this context it all makes sense. Vom. Wendy O Williams and tons of Canadian punk are canonized.

This Is The A.L.F. (Go Kart) Classic British politico-punk collection in which Conflict ("Meat Mean Murder"), Icons of Filth ("Vivisector"), Citizen Fish ("Flesh and Blood"), Chumbawamba ("Unleaver"), A Flux Of Pink Indians ("Sick Butchers") and others make you think twice about eating that White Castle. An amazing Crust and beyond comp with lots of literature thrown in.



This Jesus Must Die (Off White) Jesus Christ Superstar as performed in an Ohio rock bar... what's not to love?

Threebelow "Inside" (Sin Klub www.sinklub.com) Rage rock with a few less pussy breaks than that clown masked band.

Three Years Down "Snake's Bite," "Sneakin' In" b/w "Live Wire" (702) Genuine barpunk asswhooping.

Tijuana Hercules demo (tijuanahercules@yahoo.com) Trash garage shouldn't be too good or it's something else, and this definitely isn't too good... it's too great!

Tight Bros. From Way Back "Lend You A Hand" (Kill Rock Stars) More mellow than the last time out, which doesn't make this particularly mellow at all. At times this grooves suspiciously (and victoriously) like a live Cheap Trick show.

Tindersticks "Can our love..." (Beggars' banquet) On the cover a dude is kissing a horse, and this CD was so good I wanted to kiss the horse too.

Too Dirty For Hippies compilation (some Australian label) A genuine fucking MESS!

too legit for the pit "hardcore takes the rap" (Radical 77 Bleeker St #C2-21 NYC 10012) One nice thing about 00s punk kids as opposed to 90s punk kids is that they aren't being ironic as much. Here they aren't making fun of rap, they grew up listening to this. Most takes here are pretty original, much better than a Rock/Rap thing last year with bigger bands. The Movelife actually do a Flavor Flav impersonation on their track, Hoods do L.L., F.O. the Smack Magnet do "The Hunpity Dance," Throwdown do "Baby Got Back," and my personal fave is Candrina's take on Snoop and Dre's "Deep Cover."

Tora! Tora! Torrance! "get into it" (The Militia Group) I'm all For! For! For this! Like a well played multiball pinball sequence, the music and whined howls bounce around controlled unusual, surprising rhythms.

Tracy + The Plastics "Muscler's Guide to Videonics" (Chainsaw POB 1151 Olympia WA 98507-1151) You walk into what you think is a 1980s Berlin gay disco but it turns out to be angry women's night and you're wearing a "No Fat Chicks" T-shirt and they kill you...to the dance beat! In other words, BEST RECORD EVER!

Trailer Bride "High Seas" (Bloodshot) Spellcasting music that seems as sinister as it is pretty. There's always some undercurrent of strangeness in any American rural music, and this references that from every angle in a precious, lovely way.

Transatlantic "Bridge Across Forever" (Metal Blade) Classic rock jazz symphonies of glorious excess

Travoltas "Teenbeat" (Coldfront) Chicks dig this sensitive stuff, plus these guys have good eyebrows. They must make out like rabbits!

The Trip Daddys "Hot Chicks and Fast Kicks" (POB 5193 St. Louis, MO 63139) Demonstrating some serious Rockability, the Trips show exactly "who's your Daddys" once again. Songs about girls, rocking and driving. You were expecting a Rockability album about fishing, lab experiments and political science!

Tub Ring "Drake Equation" (Deezal/Invisible) Freaky yet clinical, scary, yet nurturing, rock yet so-much more and less than rock. Left a ring around my soul!

Two Man Advantage - 69 Minutes Of Fame documentary (Hungry Man Films 428 Broadway 6th Fl. NYC 10013) This documentary about a hockey punk band may look technically slick, but it captures a raw DIY energy just right. Best footage is either the wildman frontguy working at his day job at an architectural firm or of the band playing to empty clubs, but being so happy and enjoying each others company so much that they feel like Rock Kings!

Tyrades "Detonation" LP (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston, VA 20195) Snotty atmospheric PUNK that seems as real as bad speed. Or maybe a good whipper. I played this for two days straight.

Ugly Things magazine (\$5.95, 3707 Fifth Ave #145 SD, CA 92103) Once again Mike Stax proves he deserves either a genius grant or sainthood (his Kim Fowley cover story is a HOWL) yet once again he fails to convince me that the Pretty Things and the Downliners Sect are the best groups ever.

Ultrababyfat "eight balls in reverse" (Orange) This is as sweet, good and joyful as 75¢ off jellybeans the week after Easter! Rockin' candy pop that's good for your teeth.

The Undecided "More To See" (Tooth and Nail) I decided that I love it!

United States of Mind "True To Your School" ep (Hank293 Pawtucket Blvd. #2 Lowell, MA 01854) Basic, solid bar punk done to a "T." True-ness abounds.

The Unknown "Pop Art" (Microcosm) Pop goes my love...for this!

The Unseen "The Anger And The Truth" (BYO, byorecords.com) Puts the "unk" in "punk!" '77 style with actual style, and if you can't lose weight jumping around to this you need to get your metabolism checked.

Untitled Pamphlet Of Psychedelic Drawings (Send a stamp to Darren Merrimuk 12E-300 Roslyn Rd. Winnipeg, MB R3L 0H4) Tripped out, malformed sperms that will fertilize the egg that will crack open your mind!

Unwound "leaves turn inside you" (KRS) Pearl Jam on valium.

Urban Guerrilla Zine, UGZ Compilation (PMB 419 1442A Walnut St. Berkeley CA 94709) UGZ is a punk as hell zine that craves vert, and digs the hardcore. I really like the interviews, far better than expected. This comes with a brutal, diverse comp with shit loads of great evil sounding political hardcore. In fact there's a band with the words "shit load" in their name. Exitwound, Slowdeath, SMD, Fracas and Urko are standouts.

The Urchin "Another Day, Another Sorry State" (Broken Rekids POB 460402 SE, CA 94146-0402, brokenrekids.com) I'm Urgin' you to buy this! A Japanese take on English punk with some big rock flourishes and some hardcore thrown in.

Useless I.D. (Kung Fu POB 38009 Hollywood, CA 90038 kungfurecords.com) Joyful jukebox music.

Valve "Missionary" (Sin Klub POB 2507 Toledo OH 43606) Is that thing in your throat that makes you retch a valve?

Varukers "How Do You Sleep?????" (Go Kart) Fuck five question marks, any Varukers album deserves five exclamation points! Punk as fuck Or flavored angry declarations of disgust with a double time metal guitar solo thrown in every so often fighting music with actual convictions to fight for.

Vaz "demonstrations in micronesia" (Load POB 35 Providence, RI 02901) Open handed blows to your rock and roll head delivered with ominous heaviness and unsuspected speed.

Velevetone "Dark Blossom" (CrossCut POB 10 65 24 28065 Bremen, Germany) Solid, ominous rootsability with full twang and a few curveballs. Wanda Jackson, sounding marvelously like a cackling witch, guests on "Funnel Of Love."

The Volebeats "Mosquito Spiral" (Third Gear POB 1886 Royal Oak, MI 48068) If you like your insurgency countrified, this combo can't be vole-BEAT!

V Majestic "for educational use only" (House Of Wrong POB 921 Providence RI 02901) The "V" must stand for "Very likely the best fucking band in the world!"

Ral Partha Vogelbacher "The Moore Nice Fey Elven Gnomes Are Hiding In The Toilet Again" (Megalon POB 460383 SE, CA 94146) The title really says it all. But seriously folks, think "Syd Barrett medicated with the wrong sedatives."

W.A.C.O. "A Game Of Cards" (Transparency POB 81-1821 L.A. CA 90081) Epic mini-dramas that mix musical curdled milk with conceptual Bollywood cowboy music soundtracks.

The Wanna-Bes (Panic Button) Everybody wanna be The Ramones, but this has a few facets that make this effort worth digging. First off, Joey may have been singing teenage music, but he never sounded as young as these WBs, and second, he never had a song about a Nintendo game, which is something that needed to be taken care of.

Warped Tour 2001 Tour compilation (Side One/Dummy) Lotsa unreleased tracks by the bands the kids like (Vandals, AFI, Anti-Flag) and it's better than a board in the head.

Welt "Brand New Dream (BYO) The soundtrack to *Urban Cowboy* 2001.

The White Stripes "White Blood cells" (SFTRI) This is as good as people think Bob Dylan is, but they're wrong.

Andre Williams "Bait and Switch" (Norton Box 646 Cooper Station NYC 10276) The genius of Andre Williams was in creating a world where there was no line separating raucous party record comedy/absurdity and genuine R&B magic. Just because the record was full of dirty gutter humor didn't dismiss it from its duty to groove, and Mr. Rhythm mated these two sides of a sandwich cookie around a cream filling that I don't wanna know what it's made outta. This album is a glorious return, and in some cases improvement, on that magic. While some of his recent recordings have featured raw, nasty music that made sense with Andre's material, this album, while far from slick, is solid and locked into some real grooves that play against some genuine Andre NASTY. Just to prove that this album is all about grit meeting gold, Andre plays like to Ronnie Spector's Tina in a kicking version of "It's Gonna Work out Fine." I expect everyone who reads Roctober is gonna get this record, but just in case you think you got enuf Andre joints, let me use this space to assure you...you NEED this one, too, shmoo.

Brian Wilson "Live At The Roxy Theatre" (Oglio, oglio.com) This live set from Brian's tour last year is an amazing, entertaining earful. You're not sure where Brian's voice is amongst the harmonies, but even if he's just there for inspiration, the fact that he's inspiring, composing and realizing these undeniable pop masterpieces is something else. Perhaps there's a bit of schmalz here, but the true mark of genius craftsmanship is to compose songs that hold up and shine through no matter what the presentation. The lack of pretense (or the super oversaturation of pretense to the point where it's no longer pretense but pure pleasantness) shines through on "Add Some Music to Your Day." Hearing Brian's fragile, warm voice declare hokey odes to the power of music in our mundane everyday lives is really wonderful.

Wipe Away My Eyes: A History (of) Underground Culture and Politics, 1979-1999 (\$9.99, Abandoned House Books, POB 2871 MPLS, MN 55402) Wipe Away My Eyes isn't a collectable book for reminiscing about your punk nostalgia period, but rather it's a surprisingly vital, necessary history of an era that will become harder and harder to piece together from 7" singles and xeroxed zines as time goes on. Using the "language" of its subject (the book doesn't so much suffer as gain flavor and legitimacy from zine-like cut and paste aesthetics that unfortunately include occasional out of order pages, odd typos and missing text) this is a massive dissection of DIY music, activism, puppetry, businesses, publishing, art dissemination, and everything else that fits into and around the punk aesthetic. It offers healthy examples of and arguments for "the scene"

being a lot more than just bands. Opening with several pages in the author's voice that describe the frightening Reagan 80s, the book soon eschews an omniscient voice and utilizes series of quotes, as well as long essays and interview segments, allowing hundreds of the participants in the scene to tell their stories themselves. Though heavily skewed to the Minneapolis scene (though the reader is treated to large chunks of WDC Dischord discourse) the portrait painted here gives, for one of the first times, a wide ranging idea about what punk meant in America in the 80s and 90s. With more media members with punk pedigrees emerging, Time magazine and VH1 documentaries are going to be able to "get it right" more and more as far as describing the vitality of certain artists and records, and generally being able to describe punk music and some of its culture as it easily parallels familiar models. But as far as really describing a true underground (complete here with all the reasons for inevitable failure in many cases) it's good to see this kind of documentation going on.

The Witches "Universal Mall" (Fall Of Rome) Creepy Garage-delic incantations that sound like a few shakes of whiskey and absinthe have been thrown into the brew for every eye of newt. It has Extra Roctober points for Robots and Rats songs.

Witness Protection Program (Boot To Head) I guess this stems from Pomo Emo time signature changes, and it's definitely that tight, but it also sounds like legit hardcore, with real punk fury, without becoming contentless grind/death metal.

Wizard "Head Of The Deceiver" (LMP/SPV) It's Speedmetal, but completely palatable, clean sounding and "fresh." If Bon Jovi had faster musicians and sang songs about decapitations and magic potions...

Workin' Stiffs "Dog Tired...And Then Some" (TKO) Sounds like these guys are workin' on a few pints and pub fights. How can you not like this music?

Hawksley Workman "for him and the girls" (Isadora/ba da bing! 1221 King St. west suite 12 Toronto ONT M6K 1G4) This guy is every act on the most progressive, yet oddly regressive, Vaudeville stage your alternate universe grandpa frequented.

Wow and Flutter "Better Today Than" (Jealous Butcher) Mood music if your mood is one of elegant psychosis. You could kill a person with dainty precision while listening to this powerful stuff.

Shannon Wright "dyed in the wool" (quarter stick) It's as if a king decreed his finest minstrels compose sacred music for Halloween.

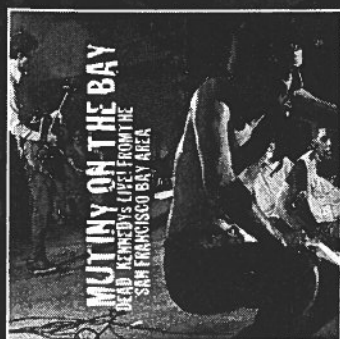
X "Aspirations" (RockNRoll Blitzkrieg/Now) This is the legendary 1979 LP by the band better known in collector circles as Australian X, the raw Oz punkers whose "I Don't Wanna Go out" is one of the best apathy anthems ever. Stupid sex songs ("Lipstick on your dipstick") semi-coherent protest songs ("Police") and a song about...Batman (?) are all done in a nasty, sublime caveman style with great (awful) bass playing, and brutal barking. This is one of my favorite punk LPs ever, and a legit release is long overdue.

The Yahoos "Fear Not The Obvious" (Bloodshot, 3039 W. Irving Park Rd. Chicago, IL 60618, bloodshotrecords.com) Barbilly tunes with a good groove, and a gold star for making a song about Hank, Jr. titled "Monkey With A Gun."

Yardbirds "Cumular Effect" (No Label) Beautiful package, chockful of rare color photos and important tracks by the last installment of the group, but it's legitimacy is suspect. Chris Dreja himself told me it's "Not exactly legit", but it was obviously compiled by fans who had access to very rare studio recordings that Epic (stupidly) dropped the ball on, so this is a great service to the fans, if not, in full, to the artists. Features some great "Little Games" era outtakes (some of which appeared on "Little Games and More"), there's four live songs recorded in Germany (which also appear, in superb quality, on the bonus CD) including celebrated guitar blowouts, "Over, Under, Sideways, Down" and "Happenings Ten Years Time Ago", but the icing on the cake is the four unreleased songs from the very last Yardbirds studio session "My Baby" by Garnett Mimms, is already well known through various live recordings, but it sounds much better here, like they've lifted it above a previous pace that stops and starts but never really picks up. Definitely more solid than their awkward live attempts. Soul was never their forte, and they'd wisely left it alone for the most part. "Spanish Blood" is an atmospheric, somewhat erotic nod to Spaghetti Westerns, maybe Peckinpah, too. It features some beautiful Spanish guitar by Page, and a Lorie Greenwich recitation by Jim McCarty (who admits the song was inspired by "Ringo") You can hear Jim go, "Oh, fuck! I did that verse

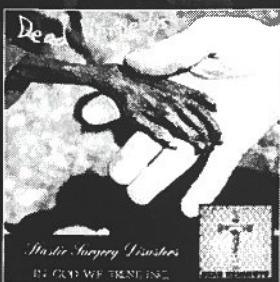
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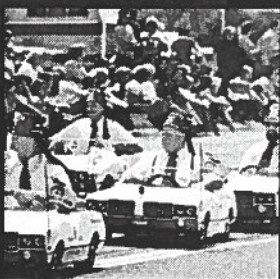
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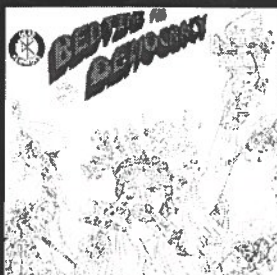
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